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THE HEIRS OF VILLEROY.

A ROMANCE.

LANE, MINERVA PRESS, LEADENHALL-STREET.

THE

HEIRS OF *VILLEROY.*

A Romance.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY

HENRIETTA ROUVIERE,

AUTHOR OF

LUSSINGTON ABBEY, &c.

As by degrees, from long, though gentle rains,
Great floods arise, and overflow the plains;
So men from little faults to great proceed,
Guilt grows on guilt, and crimes do crimes succeed.

Wadham College

VOL. I.

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1806.

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THE

HEIRS OF VILLEROY.

CHAP. I.

"Delightful task! to rear the tender thought,
"To teach the young idea how to shoot,
"And pour the fresh instruction o'er the mind."

POPE.

MR. JEFFRIES, a respectable old gentleman, who had amassed a capital fortune, in the mercantile business, in London, had lately given up trade; and, with his good old lady, were on the eve of retiring from

 the

the bustle of the metropolis, to enjoy the pure salubrious air of the country, in the peaceful reflection of their own hearts, mutually cemented by a thirty years happy union, in affection to each other, and a virtuous adherence to the laws, both of God and man. They never had any children, nor had Mr. Jeffries any relation to whom he could legally leave his property. His wife, indeed, had some connexions; but as the greater number did not want their assistance, those who did had not to wait till death, dissolving every worldly tie, gave them a chance of sharing a treasure *they* could not enjoy in the grave. To the necessities of those relatives they administered with a bounteous hand, even anticipating their wants, by giving ere it could be asked. Nor was it to those alone whom they conceived had a lawful claim on their means, that Mr. and Mrs. Jeffries were kind—every child of distress partook of their benevolence: they fed the hungry, cloathed the naked, sheltered the houseless,

houseless, and released the poor debtor; and never retired to their bed without some deed of charity in the day, sweetening the pillow of repose.

Mr. Jeffries had taken a small, though elegant, mansion, in Devonshire, adjoining the beautiful and magnificent estate of Deventon, belonging to a gentleman of the name of Grenville; and thither he was going to retire, after disposing of his great concerns in London, to pass the residue of his days.

Mrs. Jeffries enjoyed the pleasing idea of there pursuing her benevolent practices, and had already formed the intention of selecting from amongst the cottagers, a little female child, who she would adopt, and in whose company and instruction she would hope to find an agreeable employment for her declining years.

A continued bustle filled, for some days,

the house in Bloomsbury-square, previous to their departure, in which Mrs. Jeffries and her husband were equally engrossed—settling the tradesmens' bills, discharging such of the servants as were not going with them, and *she*, arranging her charitable concerns—when, as she stood in the hall with one of her poor pensioners, who was about to retire with prayers and blessings on the head of her benefactress, a little, soft, gentle voice lisped from without it—

"Buy a hapenny 'ort o' matces from a poor little dirl;"—and at the same instant a little hand modestly pushed open the door, presenting a sweet round face, pictured with the most expressive solicitation, as her rosy mouth opened with a half smile; and raising her blue eyes, she dropt an entreating curtsey to Mrs. Jeffries.

"Do, lady honour, buy a ha'penny 'ort o' matces of a poor little dirl."

"What

"What a pretty creature!" cried Mrs. Jeffries. "Come here, my love—come to me, and I'll buy your matches."

The child drew near her, but kept her eye fixed towards the door.

"Who are you looking after, my pretty dear?" asked Mrs. Jeffries.

"Mammy," replied she. "She'll do a'ay an' 'eave me in a st'eet."

"No, my love," cried Mrs. Jeffries, "you need not be afraid; I'm sure she'll not go from you." She went to the door herself as she spoke, and saw, standing at the pallisades, a tall ragged-looking young woman, who held in her apron a quantity of the brimstone materials. She dropt a salute to Mrs. Jeffries.

"Are you this child's mother?" enquired that lady, not much liking the woman's looks.

"Yes, han please your honour," replied she.

"Have you any other children?" was her next question.

"Yes, han please your ladyship," she replied; "two more, younger nor she. One hon un just hover the *measles*, and the tother stays at 'ome to take care on itt I am hobligated to come out wi' this poor creature, to try han pick hup a few ha'pennies, by selling matches, to get a bit o' bread for 'em; hand the gentlefolk do gi' Nanny han hodd one now an again, your honour, for her own sel'."

"Poor woman!" sighed Mrs. Jeffries. "Have you a husband living?"

"He henlisted for a soger, an please your ladyship, fourteen months agone," she replied, "hand left his poor wife and childer to starve hor beg."

Here the woman applied the corner of her apron to her eyes, and *appeared* to feel the

the miseries of the picture she drew, in the sad bosom that poured out the sorrowful tale.

Nanny, the little blooming cherub, who looked the perfect representation of one, notwithstanding the rags she was cloathed in, hustled in close to Mrs. Jeffries, and said, in a half whisper, to her—

"Me 'tay wi' 'ou, lady."

The words struck like electricity to the heart of her to whom they were addressed. —"Good God!" thought she, "what a simple but energetic appeal to my feelings! Why not take this little innocent being to my care as well as another, and rescue her from the distress and poverty which surrounds her—distress, that as she advances in life, with her promise of beauty, may prove her destruction."

This reflection was suddenly made, and

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"Delightful task! to rear the tender thought,
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MR. JEFFRIES, a respectable old gentleman, who had amassed a capital fortune, in the mercantile business, in London, had lately given up trade; and, with his good old lady, were on the eve of retiring from

add to the probity of it, she had not the least wish to develop it. The baby she regarded as an object of real compassion, from the miseries of its situation, but particularly from the idea she so strongly admitted of its being the offspring of more respectable parents, from the appearance which she and the woman exhibited.

She eyed the five guineas with an expression of pleasure she could not conceal, and, as if wishing to be off, she said—"Kiss me, Nanny, my dear. I must run home to my poor tother children now, hand God bless you, my ladyship.—Come, Nanny, kiss your mammy."

"No, me 'ont," cried the little thing, getting closer to Mrs. Jeffries.—"No, me 'ont, me tiss dis lady, and not 'ou.

"Ah!" exclaimed that lady to herself, "the proof is positive!"

The woman was going off, when a thought of her not again returning struck Mrs.

Mrs. Jeffries, and she called her hastily back.

"Here," said she, "is my direction; in case I should not see you any more, you will know where to enquire after the child: and, perhaps," added she, dryly, "in time you may be more candid respecting her. Only remember this, I take her for her own sake, and if ever you are inclined to be troublesome, I'll deal with you accordingly."—The housekeeper and butler had been standing in the hall during the whole transaction, to whom Mrs. Jeffries said—"I request of you, Mrs. Glynn, and you also, William, to note down particularly what has passed between this woman and me; it may be necessary hereafter."

The servants replied in the affirmative. Mrs. Jeffries led little Nanny into the parlour; the woman withdrew; and one of that lady's conjectures proved true, for she came there no more.

Nanny

Nanny was consigned to the care of Mrs. Glynn, till her outward appearance was new modelled, when Mrs. Jeffries introduced her little *protegée* to her husband. He was delighted with her engaging prattle, kissed her pretty rosy mouth, played with her fair ringlets, and having completely wound herself round their hearts, she was soon as dear to them as a child of their own could have been.

Mr. Jeffries, from the account given by his wife, and the absence of the woman, readily entered into the opinion she had formed respecting the child; and conceiving it to be an act of justice to the parents and itself, advertised her in all the public papers, giving a reference to a respectable house in London for particulars, and that if any person proved a claim to such a child, she should be given up.

This advertisement was continued for upwards of three months, when no application

cation of any kind being made, it was thought useless to insert it longer, and it was therefore discontinued. Yet still their doubts were far from being removed, as the child sometimes expressed herself in such terms, as, in her little lisping manner, made them imagine there was some other person who she used to call "mammy;" but whether that person was her nurse or her mother she alluded to, it was not possible to trace, from the unconnected and passing recollection she appeared to have of such a person.

When they went into Devonshire, the child, whose name they refined from Nanny to Anna, seemed wonderfully delighted with the green fields, and view of the country; and at intervals would exclaim—"Me at 'ome wi' mammy, me det poses in a deen fee'ds."

What the child's meaning was they could not possibly make out, but it enforced the

the suspicions of Mr. and Mrs. Jeffries, and they now believed the little creature to have been stolen from some country place, and the appearance of the fields had brought a faint recollection of it to her infantine mind.

The owners of Deventon-house, Mr. and Mrs. Grenville, paid their respects to their new neighbours, and an intimacy was soon formed between the two families. They had but one child, a daughter, named Emily, a charming little girl, whose age seemed to correspond with Anna's, she being just four, and the other they judged to be somewhat past it. The children soon formed an attachment, and became inseparable companions. They played together, walked together, learned of the same teachers, and finally became so fond of each other, that they were constant guests at one or other of the two houses, which were only divided by Deventon park wall.

Mr.

Mr. and Mrs. Jeffries, on leaving London, had issued a peremptory mandate to the servants, that in every thing relating to the child they would observe a most profound silence, on the forfeiture of their places, and their lasting resentment; and this command, coming from so respected a master and mistress, was, with a kind of reverence to their orders, obeyed. She was always called by her friends Anna, by the servants the same, with the addition of Miss; and as she grew up she was noticed in the neighbourhood by the name of Jeffries, without its being known whether she had a right to it, or even any thought given to it. Her having come into the country with, and her situation in the family, made the people suppose she was a near relation to either Mr. or Mrs. Jeffries; but as neither of them ever discussed any point respecting Anna, and behaving to her at all times as to a child, it was only known she was not their daughter; and for the rest no one had

had formed an idea of investigating her relative situation to the family.

Generally about once a year there came on a visit to Deventon, a Lord and Lady Fitzwalter. Mrs. Grenville was aunt to his lordship, and most affectionately attached to his lady. Indeed it was almost impossible she could be otherwise, for Lady Fitzwalter might have passed for the representative of chastity. Mild, dignified, and elegant, she won the hearts of all beholders. Here it was that Anna, often meeting her ladyship, conceived for her a most ardent attachment, anticipating each periodical return of Lord and Lady Fitzwalter to Deventon, with an eagerness which bordered on uneasiness as the time approached. Circumstances, however, gave to Anna an opportunity of frequently seeing her ladyship, from her becoming the resident of a very elegant little lodge adjoining the park; and whether it was that the marked notice of the girl, or the gentle

turn

turn of her disposition, had attracted Lady Fitzwalter, she was herself not aware of, but her ladyship certainly regarded the pretty little creature with a fondness she had conceived her heart incapable of feeling. Strange, that such a heart as Lady Fitzwalter possessed, could ever be insensible to sweet affection! yet it was—a heavy calamity had deadened the tenderer emotions of it, and only the soft Anna could reanimate their long-suppressed feelings. But as Lord and Lady Fitzwalter form distinguished characters in this story, we will not, like——Like what?—Like *my* country, make a beginning at the end, but honour them with a new chapter.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

"Mark where yon broken pillars strew the plain,
"There rose a stately dome in ancient time;
"There oft was heard the soul-entrancing strain,
"And laurell'd bards awoke the song sublime!"

RUINS OF PALMYRA.

IN a spot where Nature seemed to have been lavish of her choicest bounties, near the delightful vale of Wensley, in the north of England, stood the yet stately remains of a venerable pile of architecture —a castle, whose walls formerly echoed to the resounding shouts of mirth and festivity; whose tables had groaned beneath the

the weight of the luxurious banquet; and where the ancient minstrels, striking the swelling chords of the harp, sung "the deeds of old;" while youthful warriors, listening with attentive ears, caught the enthusiastic strain, and felt their bosoms glow with renovated ardour, to emulate the heroe sof past days..

This castle, whose romantic situation inspired the beholder with no less awe than admiration, took its name from the river *Eure*, whose playful meanderings wound in various forms through the extensive domain, giving additional beauty to the picturesque scenery. A thick wood of elm and venerable oak, some yet retaining their pristine majesty, and others withering with age, shaded the walls of this ancient building, while lofty hills, rising beyond it, threw a solemn gloom around, presenting to the admiring eye a sublime display of nature and art.

On

On many parts of this venerable structure the hand of time had made dreadful ravages; but there was yet sufficient of it remaining to point out what the whole had been some centuries back; and the side fronting the west had still withstood the depredations of its destroying power.

The awful sublimity of the place had given rise to numerous strange reports concerning it, which gaining strength by repetition, and always some fresh addition, had at length so impressed with terror the minds of the poor inhabitants round it, that hardly would any of them venture to pass the wood after sun-set, from the idea of its being the nocturnal preambulation of beings long sunk to the grave, but whose spirits, they supposed, still wandered within the castle walls, and nightly trod the dark recesses of its surrounding groves.

An old man and woman had, for many years,

years, been the only residents of it; and *he*, possessing more of understanding than his venerable companion, only allowed to sometimes *hearing* strange noises about the building, but never seeing any thing that could alarm him, or certify the truth of these reports; while she averred having both *seen* and *heard*, though to the former assertion she never could adduce any positive proof, notwithstanding she was decided in her belief of it. Whether the mind of Margarette, weakened by encreasing years, had conjured up ideal forms to her view, or an habitual superstition had acquired force from concurring circumstances, and an accusing conscience gave strength to it, or whether, in short, she had any real ground for her declaration, it was not for those poor uneducated children of labour round her to fathom; but convinced that the castle and the wood were haunted by grim ghosts and stalking spectres, the former place they never entered,

tered, and the latter never passed after day-light.

The Lord Fitzwalter, its present owner, to whose family the castle had belonged for many generations, heard these superstitious tales, and, like old Margarette, was either weak enough to credit them, and would not venture himself in a company of such *grave* inhabitants, or some more probable cause made him avoid the place; but certain it was, he had not for many years visited it, but suffered it to decay, without any attempt to preserve its walls, or even making enquiry into the state of it, though carefully receiving the rents arising from the estate, through the hands of Robert, the old man already mentioned.

The father of the present Lord Fitzwalter was a man of the most liberal disposition, which he had the power, equally with the will, of indulging, by being master

master of an immense fortune. He loved to preserve all the good old English customs; gave his tenants, every Christmas, roast beef and plumb-pudding, plenty of good old ale, and joined in the evening the happy group assembled in the great hall of Eure Castle, to the sound of the ancient harp, footing it away with some rosy-cheeked damsel, and not considering himself the haughty lord of the domain, but the happy master of a grateful people. On a Twelfth Night he had collected all the young men and maidens round about the place, in the banqueting-room, where he himself divided a large cake, with a ring in it, and whoever's lot it fell to, was to select a partner for life from the company, when his Lordship named the wedding-day, attended it as the bride's father, and made her a present suitable to both their circumstances.

Every festival throughout the year was preserved in its general forms, and Lord Fitzwalter was never truly happy but when

of his minority, conceiving it possible he might there acquire more liberal sentiments, by the example of his brother officers, as his Lordship was aware that economy was not the general characteristic of the gentlemen of that profession, and by entering into their pursuits, they might strike a medium between parsimony and extravagance.

At the age of nineteen this plan was put into execution, and young Fitzwalter entered a candidate for the hero's laurel. He was not averse to that line of life, for he did not want for courage; and his person being very pleasing, he made no contemptible figure *en militaire*, in the noble regiment of the Guards. But ere many months had passed over, the good, the benevolent, the exalted Lord Fitzwalter, more exalted by his virtues than his rank, was gathered to his forefathers, and his remains deposited in their silent mansion, amidst the tears and sighs of hundreds of heart-

heart-breaking mourners, who, when the coffin was disappearing from their view, crowded towards it, in speechless agony of grief, to kiss the shell which inclosed the last of their generous friend, their adored master, and their eternally-regretted patron.

The grief of young Fitzwalter for the loss of his father, was compensated by the gain of a disencumbered estate of thirty thousand a-year, which, on attaining the age of twenty-one, he became master of, and resigned his commission.

During the short time of Fitzwalter's being in the Guards, he had acquired two passions. One of them had been noble, did not his still dear idol, money, attach itself to the object, with more powerful charms than either youth, beauty, or goodness could give, and assuming the form of Love, he believed himself his votary, though, in fact, it was Plutus he worshipped under

his shape. The other was a thirst for gaming, in which, having hitherto been successful, he had pursued his good fortune; but as his interest in the other quarter obliged him to be cautious, he, with an art peculiar to his sordid mind, pretended to be disgusted with it, and shunned all places where it was practised.

Miss Villeroy was formed to engage all hearts, both by the uncommon loveliness of her person, and elegance of her mind. She was gentle, mild, and retired; her sole desire was to please a dear brother, and his wish was to her a command. They were the children of a wealthy East India merchant, who had married a rich East Indian; but being both deceased, Augustus Villeroy, and Caroline, his sister, were the sole inheritors of their wealth.

Villeroy was born in Calcutta, where he resided the first years of his childhood; and on coming to Europe with his parents, the

the change of climate operated on his and his mother's constitution so fatally, that it killed her in a short time, and debilitated his through life. Caroline, who had received her birth in England, soon after the family arrived in it, formed the happiness of her brother's juvenile years; he adored his little beautiful sister, and in proportion as her age advanced, their mutual affection encreased; and when, at her father's demise, she was left under the protection of her brother, he sought, by every attention, to promote her happiness. His health gradually declining, she, in return, exerted every agreeable power she was mistress of, to dissipate the lassitude which attends a delicate habit of body. His disorder was adjudged to be on his liver, from its attacks being periodical; and whenever it occasioned his confinement, Caroline was his nurse, resigning, without a thought of regret, all the amusements of life, to attend the bed-side of an invalid brother. He was, at one time, ordered

by his physicians to Barege in France, whither Miss Villeroy accompanied him, and where he found such relief, that for some months after his return he was better than he had been for as many years; but still he felt his complaint not entirely removed, and judging it must, sooner or later, terminate his existence, it became his most ardent wish to see his beloved sister married, before he left her without a protector, and with the immense fortune she would possess, probably become the prey of some artful fortune-hunter.

It was at this period that Fitzwalter was introduced to the acquaintance of Villeroy; his connexions, his rank, and his respectability, gave him a just claim to the notice of the latter; and as the former had heard of the vast property possessed by the brother and sister, he lost no opportunity of conciliating his favour. Villeroy presented him to Caroline as his friend, and

as

as such he was soon a favourite of her's. Fitzwalter was not wanting in address; he certainly admired her, as much as was in the nature of a man to do, who had not a more interesting object in view. He paid his addresses in form, received the brother's consent, and Miss Villeroy, finding her lover so highly favoured by the friend and relative she most desired to please, assented to his proposals, and a day was appointed for their marriage.

In this union Lord Fitzwalter not only had the large fortune of Miss Villeroy in view, but the superior one of her brother, who, from being a bachelor, and in a delicate state of health, he had very good grounds for conjecturing that the whole fortune would ere long rest with him, in right of his wife.

Caroline Villeroy received the name and title of Fitzwalter in London, and with her his Lordship had the higher satisfaction of getting

getting ninety thousand pounds. They immediately quitted the metropolis, and, accompanied by Mr. Villeroy and a few friends, repaired to the magnificent seat of Eure Castle, where they were received with every demonstration of joy, and where Lady Fitzwalter, copying the virtues of its deceased owner, was soon as much beloved as her Lord was disliked. A total change took place in the household arrangements; the old servants, who had hoped to pass the remainder of their days within the Castle, were dismissed to adjoining cottages, and were it not for Lady Fitzwalter, had not probably been allowed to remain on the estate. But though her Ladyship made it a rule never to interfere in the concerns of her Lord, without it was his desire, she could not behold this unnecessary, and, as she secretly thought, unkind change, without feeling a wish to alleviate it as far as in her power. Her marriage settlement was noble; for however his Lordship might wish the contrary, it

it was impossible it could be otherwise; nor had he the authority of restraining her disposal of it in whatever manner she pleased. Her Ladyship, therefore, acted on this occasion with the same kindness which she exemplified at every opportunity where it was required. She purchased a range of cottages, wherein she comfortably placed those old servants, and considering them as her pensioners, provided for them accordingly. This first display of her bounty procured her the love of every one round the Castle; and her subsequent attention to their wants, her protection of the little children, her zeal to relieve the distressed, and her gentle deportment to her inferiors as well as superiors, established her in the hearts of the people, and they looked on her Ladyship as the kind and lovely representative of their dear lamented Lord.

Mr. Villeroy found the air round Eure Castle agree with him, and remained there

longer than he had at first intended. His sister took notice that of late he was uncommonly low spirited, and that it was caused by some letters he had received from London. She could not fix on any friend of his, within her knowledge, whose correspondence appeared to her likely to produce that effect. That they could be on no business of a hostile nature, she was tolerably certain; and that he was not engaged in any love affair, she believed. He had once been very partial to a young lady, a Miss Howard, who had been a very favourite acquaintance also of Lady Fitzwalter's, when Miss Villeroy, and she was equally partial to her brother; but the very bad state of his health obliging him at that time to go to Barege, the business rested there; and at their return from thence Miss Howard had left England with her father, who had gone as private secretary to France, with the English Ambassador; nor had her Ladyship noticed her brother mentioning, in any particular manner,

manner, the name of Marianne Howard since their return. Indeed, the state of his health led her to suppose he never would marry, as he often, in conversation with her, gave it as an objection against his ever doing so; and this was also understood by Lord Fitzwalter, on their closer intimacy, and on which he founded the golden prospect he already grasped in idea.

The uneasiness of Villeroy, however, rather seemed to increase than diminish; his sister tenderly enquired the cause, expressing her fears that he was not as well as he pretended to be.

"Indeed, my loved Caroline," would he say, "your fears are at this time groundless; I feel myself better in health *here* than I did in London, or even any place since I left Barege; but how long I may continue so," would he add, with a half smile, "is uncertain. I hoped all my cares

cares in this world were over, when I saw you under the protection of a worthy man, and to life I was indifferent; for though in possession of every worldly blessing which affluence could give, the debility of my frame prevented me enjoying it, and in the midst of a happiness I have been miserable. Yet," would he continue, "I now wish to live, not on my own account, but——"

"But what, my beloved Augustus?" as tenderly taking his hand, Lady Fitzwalter's expressive eyes spoke more enquiry than her words.

"There is a person, my Caroline," answered he, "for whose sake I would wish to live a little longer—a person whose affection for me deserves to be rewarded as far as in my power;—whose constitution has been impaired.—Do not think me vain, Caroline," he continued; "you know I am not; and when I tell you it has been the fate of a lovely amiable woman to select me as the object of her tenderest affections,

tions, and nourish a passion she believed hopeless within her own bosom, till accident discovered it, you will agree with me in saying, that honour, generosity, and," added he with a smile, "revived affection on my side, demands that I should repay the anxiety I have unknowingly given her heart, by flying to offer her mine, and my hand."

"O, Augustus!" cried Lady Fitzwalter, "it will be acting as you should. My mind tells me who the fair object is."

"Beware, my Caroline!" cried Villeroy, hastily, "the subject is a delicate one. Mention it not, I entreat you, to any person —not even your Lord. I am setting out for Paris immediately, where, in a short time, my destiny will one day or other be decided. One request I have to make of you, my Caroline—it may be the last I ever shall."

"Dear Augustus!" exclaimed Lady Fitzwalter, the tears trembling in her eyes, "why mention so cruel an idea? You will

live,

live, I trust and hope, to make many of me. O, my brother, did I think we were never again to meet after this parting, my heart would surely break!"

"For shame, Caroline," cried he, essaying to rally her spirits, "I thought you a heroine; have you not often sat by my bed-side, when you hardly dared to hope I would ever quit it but for my grave, and instead of exhibiting a doleful countenance before me, exerted all your best spirits to entertain me; and now that you see me tolerably well, and on the point of becoming a Benedict, you suffer your imagination to be clouded with dismal forebodings."

"Ah, Augustus," she replied, "were I still by your side, I would not indulge those fancies, but separated from you, I must be wretched, while the delicacy of your health fills me with apprehension for your safety. Oh!" she added, "would I were yet Caroline Villeroy, that, near you, I might again be your soother, your attendant,

tendant, your nurse, did your fatal complaint require my care."

"Don't you know, my love," said he, "I am going to provide myself with a kind attendant to take your place, should it be necessary. But, believe me, my Caroline," added he, fondly pressing her to his bosom, "not even the name of wife can give to me the tender affection you possess in my heart: since your birth it has adored you, and until death closes the scene, you will remain its most beloved object. The request I have to make of you, my sister, is of a nature so momentous to my peace, that I am convinced of your compliance with it ere it is made."

"O, I promise," cried she, "be it what it may!"

"Be composed," said he, "while I mention it.—Consider, my much-loved sister, that for years my life has been precarious, and sooner or later it must fall a sacrifice to my obstinate disorder, which no skill has

has been able to remove. Caroline," added Villeroy, taking her hand with solemnity, "I am going to France, with the intention of being married; should I never see you again, and that Marianne Howard becomes my wife, receive and love her as your sister, for the sake of Augustus Villeroy."

"Augustus!" shrieked Lady Fitzwalter, throwing herself into his arms, "your words are a presentiment of our never meeting more.—O, my brother! my brother!"

Villeroy was very much affected; he felt too surely that the agitation his mind had undergone since the father of Marianne Howard had written to him on the subject of his daughter's unhappy situation, which he very lately discovered the cause of, had injured him very seriously; and the anxiety he endured on her account, co-operating with his feelings on many other, he secretly

cretly believed would, before long, prove the final issue of his poor struggling existence.

Lord Fitzwalter was given to understand that it was Villeroy's health which was again taking him to France; and while he openly expressed his hopes of the journey proving beneficial to him, he, in his heart, belied his words, and secretly prayed he might never see him again.

Villeroy took leave of his weeping sister, with an emotion which foretold they were never more to meet in this world. As she stood in the hall, sobbing out her last adieu to him, alternately pressing his hand to her lips, and wiping away her streaming tears, Guilford, his own man, came up.—Lady Fitzwalter caught his arm—"Guilford," cried she, "I charge you, by your affection to your master, be careful of him on the journey: watch his looks, anticipate his very wishes, and suffer him not to hurry

hurry himself on it beyond his strength; and oh!" added she, in a voice of the most humble entreaty, "as you value the peace, the life, of his sister, let me have one line, I ask but one line from you, every post town you pass through, to inform me how he is, and do not deceive me in your account; let me know the truth, be it good or bad. Promise me, Guilford, and I will endeavour to be composed."

"I do promise you, my Lady," replied the man, moved almost to tears at the touching expression of her request, and the violent agitation she was in. "I promise your Ladyship most faithfully, and most faithfully will I keep it."

"Thank you, a thousand thousand times, good Guilford," she cried, "I will now be more tranquil. Here," added she, drawing out her purse, and putting it into his hand, "take this."—The man, bowing respectfully, made a motion of not accepting it.—"Take it to oblige me," said she.—He did so—"And should the event I dread

dread take place," she faintly articulated —" should it be Heaven's will never to reunite, in this life, the fondest brother and sister that ever existed in it, never quit his last remains, till"—she could not utter it— "Guilford," added she, after a few moments' pause, "by your allegiance to your master, you will ever find a friend in me."

She approached Villeroy, who had retired during her address to the man, and throwing herself into his arms with a sort of desperate energy, she exclaimed—"Farewell, Augustus; in this world, or the next, we'll meet again—in this world and the next, Augustus Villeroy will be unrivalled by human being in the heart of Caroline Fitzwalter."

" My sister, my adored Caroline !" cried he, " receive the blessings, the prayer of your brother for your happiness, and as you love him, he conjures you to remember."

She let go the hold she had of him, and throwing herself on her knees, with her

hands clasped together—"To you and yours," exclaimed her Ladyship, with the most solemn fervour—"to you and yours, Augustus Villeroy, I vow eternal affection; and may Heaven deal with me as I fulfil your charge."

Augustus raised her—she once more threw herself into his arms. It was a *last* embrace. He tore himself from her, jumped into the chaise, and, followed by Guilford, it drove off with rapidity.

"He is gone—gone for ever!" she shrieked.—"Oh Villeroy, my brother, we never meet more!"—and dropped senseless in the arms of Lord Fitzwalter and a servant, who caught her as she was falling.

Her words were prophetic, for in this world they never met again.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

"Each lonely scene shall thee restore,
"For thee the tear be duly shed,
"Belov'd, till life can charm no more,
"And mourn'd, till Pity's self be dead.

COLLINS.

GUILFORD was faithful to the promise he gave Lady Fitzwalter; he wrote through every town they passed; and his letters, sometimes accompanied with one from Villeroy himself, helped to relieve her mind from the weight of anguish which preyed on it, as they convinced her of his

continuing as well during the journey, as he had been when she parted from him; and her Ladyship fondly hoped her terrors for him had magnified her fears of his danger, and that, instead of a relapse of his complaint, what she so much apprehended, the air of France might, on the contrary, prove the means of preventing one.

Villeroy reached Paris, without experiencing any particular inconvenience on the journey; and after stopping a few days to recover from the usual fatigue attendant on a long one, he hastened to the hotel of Mr. Howard, whose joy at seeing him was as great as it was unexpected.

Marianne Howard was just recovering from a long and tedious illness, which had commenced with a fever on her spirits; and it was during it that her physicians, after some scrutiny into the origin of her malady, declared it to her father to be a love case, when he tenderly questioning her, she confessed

confessed her attachment for Villeroy, who she once believed to have regarded her with something more than common esteem: that she loved him, and indulged her affection under the idea of its being returned; but his setting out for Barege with his sister, it was then, for the first time, her eyes opened to the delusions of her own fancy. He parted from her—not as a lover, but as a friend, as a person who, being on a most affectionate intercourse with Miss Villeroy, demanded his attention. Her heart was sensible of its error, but too late—it was his beyond her power to recall it. —Yet, when she heard he was returned to England, and reported to be restored to health, again Hope deceived her; she fancied he had waited its recovery, ere he made known to her his sentiments, and each day passed over in a trembling, doubtful expectation of the following one bringing her some accounts from him. He neither came to Paris, where she then was, or wrote, though, in his sister's letters, which

she frequently received, there was always some kind remembrance of her. It preyed, at length, so much on her mind, that her health daily suffered from the agitation of it, and a violent fever attended. It was during her slow convalescence that Marianne, at his earnest entreaties, made this discovery to her father; and he, dreading to lose his darling and only child, who the physicians had strong apprehensions was getting into a decline, wrote to Villeroy a full statement of his daughter's situation, though in such a manner as neither to injure her or his own delicacy, or throw the most trifling shadow of blame on the conduct of Villeroy, who, in truth, did not merit any; and this letter, written without the knowledge of Miss Howard, operated like a shock of electricity on his mind, and caused a revolution throughout his whole frame. He accused himself of what he really did not deserve—dishonour; acknowledged to his own heart that he had been particularly attentive in his conduct

to

to Miss Howard, who he more than admired; but he had not the most distant idea, or wish of gaining her affections, as he was of opinion, did he marry, he would soon leave his wife a widow, and the idea of that deterred him from it. For several days after Villeroy had received this letter from Mr. Howard, he was incapable of answering it; he felt himself declining very fast, inwardly, and he dreaded that his death, as the husband of Marianne, might prove of more fatal consequence to her than were she not his wife:—yet again, the idea of her believing herself deceived, neglected, slighted by him, was too hurtful to his feelings, and he at last determined on setting off for Paris, presenting himself to her as her long and fondly-attached lover, whose peculiar situation had alone prevented him from declaring himself before. He wrote to Mr. Howard, declaring his sentiments and his intentions, requesting that what had passed between them might remain a secret to *all* but themselves, only

to apprise his daughter, in as delicate a manner as possible, of his going to Paris, whither he would hasten, with as much expedition as it was possible to make.

The frequent accounts from Villeroy to his sister were of a most pleasing nature; he wrote in a manner to assure her of his tranquillity both in mind and body, and that he hoped, ere very long, to be able to inform her he was a happy husband, as his dear and respected Marianne had promised to be his, when the necessary forms of law business were adjusted; but that she must not expect their speedy return to England, as it would be necessary, for both their healths, they should try a few months the southern air of France, and for which reason they intended setting off immediately after their marriage to Montpellier.

Lady Fitzwalter having been previously cautioned by her brother against mentioning the subject of his intended marriage,

riage, till it had actually taken place, was perfectly taciturn in every thing relating to it; and Lord Fitzwalter had not the most remote suspicion of such an event, till the unexpected and unwelcome intelligence reached him like a clap of thunder, and as fatal in its effects, overthrew the bright fabric, whose foundation his Lordship had believed secure.

"Villeroy married!" he exclaimed, in a tone of voice which could not conceal the rancour of his heart. "Much fitter for him to have signed his will, than his marriage settlement!"

"My Lord," cried Lady Fitzwalter, surprised and vexed at the unkindness of the expression, "what do you mean? Does the marriage of Villeroy displease you?"

"I think," he replied, "that a man with one foot in the grave had very little business to marry."

"I hope, my Lord," answered she, as

mildly as she could, "though he *has* one foot in the grave, it may be many years before the other follows it."

"You are a cursed fool for your wish then," said he, peevishly, "for you'd be a gainer by it."

"I would indeed, my Lord," she replied, "gain that which no event of life could deprive me of—a sorrowing heart."

Lord Fitzwalter walked away without answering her; he had already said more than he intended, but his surprise had thrown him off his guard; he had sufficient policy, however, to retire, ere he awoke her suspicions by any further untimely expressions.

Lady Fitzwalter, whose heart was goodness itself, never conceived an opinion of her Lord inimical to his honour; she, therefore, passed over, without any further notice, the few unkind words he had let

let escape, attributing them rather to a momentary effusion of surprise, than to any hidden bad passion.

Seven or eight months had elapsed since Villeroy's marriage, during which period Lady Fitzwalter had constant letters both from her brother and Mrs. Villeroy, which as often presented a pleasing account of their health, and couched in terms expressive of their mutual happiness, and the fond hope they had of adding to it ere long in her dear society, as it was their intention of returning to England early in the ensuing spring. Lady Fitzwalter's apprehensions were now entirely removed, and she anticipated their meeting with the tenderest and most ardent satisfaction.

Lord Fitzwalter was gone to attend Parliament in London, but his Lady, devoted to the sweet romantic beauties of Eire Castle, had declined attending him; and as his Lordship was not *very* urgent for her going,

she was guilty of no violent breach of duty in refusing to accompany him.

While Lady Fitzwalter indulged herself in the contemplation of a reunion with a dear and fond brother, she noticed a longer lapse of time than usual in the arrival of letters. She, at first, fondly hoped it might be occasioned by their having already commenced their journey, and that they intended to surprise her most agreeably; but day after day passed, till every conjecture of hope became absorbed in one dreadful idea; and to the torture of suspense, added the destructing thought that Villeroy was dead.

Restless, miserable, almost frantic at the idea for which there were but too just grounds for suspicion, Lady Fitzwalter, finding her repeated letters still unanswered, determined, at length, on sending a special messenger off to Montpellier, to learn the cause of it. The person whom her

her Ladyship fixed on for the purpose, was a nephew of the village curate, a young active man, and whose knowledge of the French language would enable him to pass through the country without any unnecessary delay. She had already spoken to him, and he only waited to get ready a few little useful articles for his journey, before he set out on it. Every moment he delayed appeared to Lady Fitzwalter an age; she gave directions that he should be provided with every necessary, at the Castle, to accelerate his departure; and the house steward was absolutely packing up a small portmanteau, full of requisites, when her Ladyship, throwing on her cloak, set out towards the parsonage-house, to inform the young man herself of every thing being already provided for him. She had to pass up the great avenue, a long and gloomy walk, whose sides, covered with the thick foliage of immense trees, shaded every distant object; and her Ladyship had nearly reached the extent of it, before she perceived,

perceived, standing at the extremity, a chaise and four. She started—and suddenly stopped. It was an involuntary emotion, for the sight of a carriage was not a circumstance in itself to surprise her; but a feeling, she could not account for, took instant possession of her, and she was obliged to lean against the branch of a tree for support.

"Why," said she, after a few moments pause, recovering herself—"Why am I thus weakly alarmed at a trifle!—at nothing!—for surely that chaise can be nothing to me!"

Lady Fitzwalter kept her eyes fixed on it, though without moving herself. A man, on horseback, appeared attentively speaking to some person within it; he seemed as if very anxious, for once or twice he turned away from the window, then again approached it, spoke to another person, who was also on horseback, when, after seemingly

seemingly giving him some particular charge, he turned his horse, in a quick gallop, down the avenue.

He was close to Lady Fitzwalter in an instant. She sprang forward—"Guilford!" shrieked she. The man pulled in. —"Lady Fitzwalter!" he repeated, in an accent which evinced that she was, of all others, the person he wished less to meet.

It, however, passed her observation at the moment, for she perceived he wore no insignia of death about him, and she hastily exclaimed—

"Who is in that carriage?—Is it my brother?"

The man made no reply.

"Why do not you answer me?" she cried. "Guilford, where is your master? —How is he?—Does he live?"

"I hope

"I hope he does, my Lady," replied the man, dejectedly.

"Hope!" exclaimed she, "Is it then doubtful?"

"Do not agitate yourself thus, for God's sake, Madam!" cried Guilford.—"I wish I had not, so unfortunately, met your Ladyship, but ——"

"But what?" she cried.—"You have, indeed, agitated me—but the truth cannot produce worse effects on me, than I feel at this moment of suspense! But what? say, good Guilford, what?"

"My master is very ill," replied the man, in a hesitating voice—"at least he was so when I left him."

"Left him! Left him where?" cried Lady Fitzwalter, with a half frantic wildness in her manner—"O Guilford, Guilford! did you not promise never to quit him while he had life?"

"And I have done it now by his own commands, Madam," replied he; "nothing

thing but the cause which demanded I should do so, would have forced me from his side, though I even had not promised."

"Forgive me, Guilford!" said Lady Fitzwalter, "I did not mean to wound your feelings—I am certain of what you say. And what was that cause?"

"To deliver into your Ladyship's hands" —— The man could not proceed; tears rolled down his cheeks; it was not possible for him to conceal them.

Lady Fitzwalter's heart sunk within her, but hope, fallacious hope, still trembled at it, as she remembered he had said—Villeroy was yet living; and almost, at the same instant, the idea struck her of its being perhaps his wife, whose death Guilford was come to announce.

"Mrs. Villeroy!" cried her Ladyship. "Is she then ——"

"Here," said the man.

"Here!"

"Here!" echoed Lady Fitzwalter, "Here!—then I know the charge you bring me, Guilford—And Villeroy!—Villeroy!—Oh, my brother!"

Guilford was obliged to support her; he conjured her Ladyship to be calm—to struggle against her emotions, for the sake of the poor unhappy sufferer in the carriage, whose situation demanded every comfort, she being very near to become a mother.

"Oh, Madam!" cried the poor fellow, sobbing out his words in half-broken sentences, "Oh, Madam, my poor mistress does indeed require comfort. I believe her dear heart is almost broke;—she has neither eat, nor, I believe, slept, since we have been on the journey, nor has she spoken a dozen words since she parted from my beloved master."

Lady Fitzwalter raised her head—"Great God!" she cried, "give me strength to administer

minister to her a comfort I stand in need of myself. For the sake of Villeroy, Oh, my God! enable me to speak peace to her sorrowing bosom."—And after a pause she added—"Then Villeroy is no more?"

"By this time," sighed out Guilford—"I fear so—but I have *obeyed* his most anxious wish—I have attended Mrs. Villeroy here—I will fulfil every tittle of his desire, by placing her in your Ladyship's hands, and then, as quick as horses and wind will permit me, I return—either to receive his last breath, or stay by his loved remains, till they are deposited." The man's emotions stopped his utterance; he sobbed audibly.

"Oh, Villeroy! Villeroy!" faintly exclaimed Lady Fitzwalter, "My prophetic heart spoke too true! We parted never again to meet in this world. Thy last request, my brother, *shall* be obeyed; the wife of thy bosom shall be the fond sister of mine.—Lead me to her, Guilford—lead me to the poor afflicted mourner!"

Lady

from you; alas! no—I was dragged from your beloved sight, by him who has faithfully adhered to his charge. But the last pang of death cannot—will not equal the separation of that moment."

She was obliged to pause several times in her discourse, while the wretched Lady Fitzwalter alternately administered to her some reviving cordial, or some soothing endearment; and, oh! the restrained agonies of her own heart almost burst it asunder.

"Tell him," added Mrs. Villeroy, "I live.—Oh, may I live to give life to his infant, and then—then, my God, may I rejoin my Villeroy in Heaven! But, oh! my husband, thou art already there. When I parted from thee, thy last hour was fast approaching. What then is there to tell? —Nothing. Go then, Guilford, and complete thy task; attend the last remains of the best of masters; and should I never again see you, take what your fidelity de-

serves from me—the thanks, the gratitude of my breaking heart, for you have nobly merited them."

Guilford knelt by the side of the bed; he pressed her hand respectfully to his lips; the big tear rolled on it; he hastily arose; all speech was denied him.—The chaise waited, he flung himself into it, and, hardly allowing time to stop on the road for necessary refreshments, he was, in a very few days, at Montpellier. All was, indeed, over! Villeroy had not lived many hours after the departure of his wife: And the faithful Guilford, whose arrival was waited for, before any directions were given about the body, except placing it in a shell, it being the particular orders of Villeroy, saw every thing necessary done, when, with the body, he quitted Montpellier, and never parted from it, till it was deposited in the family vault; after which, with a mind and frame nearly exhausted, he returned to Eure Castle, and gave, into the

the hands of Mrs. Villeroy, the last will and testament of her departed husband, which had been sealed and secured by himself, in a small writing case, a few days previous to his dissolution.

The physician who attended Mrs. Villeroy pronounced to Lady Fitzwalter, at her earnest request, the fatal sentence, which her own opinion but too well agreed in, that all hope of her recovery was at an end, and that, in giving life to her child, she would, most probably, resign her own; but if she did survive that moment, it would not be for many days, as her strength of mind and body were both gone.

To describe the anguish, the dreadful agonies which Lady Fitzwalter's mind endured, would not be possible; and was there not some shadow of comfort open to her, in the hope of folding to her wretched heart a dear child of Villeroy's, she must have

have sunk beneath the complication of sorrowful events, which so rapidly followed one another.

Lord Fitzwalter had hastened his return to the Castle, on being apprised of them; and whether his heart really felt concerned, or not, for the death of Villeroy, and the wretched widow and sister, it was only himself could tell; but he appeared much affected, and was kindly attentive to both.

The hour drew near which was to decide the trembling apprehensions of Lady Fitzwalter, and the life or death of Mrs. Villeroy—a moment which Lord Fitzwalter as impatiently waited, for the decision of his own avaricious hopes, that worked him up to believe neither mother or child would survive. But how were these ambitious prospects defeated, when instead of one opponent to his golden views, there appeared two! Mrs. Villeroy gave birth to a son and a daughter, and her own life,

faintly glimmering like the feeble rays of a half-extinguished lamp, was yet prolonged a few days.

As only one nurse had been provided, a young woman belonging to the Castle, the daughter of Margarette, who had resided there herself many years, and during the lifetime of the old Lord and Lady Fitzwalter, the two children were obliged to be given to her care for the present, till another was found; and Margarette, then rather a young woman, was appointed assistant.

Lady Fitzwalter watched the quivering flame, as it weakly twinkled: She sat at the bed-side of the expiring mother, whose glazed eyes turned from one infant to the other, held in the arms of Margarette and Catherine, standing at each side of her. A hectic seized Mrs. Villeroy—it was the forerunner of Death—he was making hasty strides—she opened her pale lips——

"Be

"Be a mother to the children of Villeroy," faintly passed them. "Promise."

Lady Fitzwalter motioned the two women to approach—she sunk on her knees, and laying a hand on the head of each child, pronounced with a solemn voice—

"I here vow, while I have life, to fulfil to these children the duty of the fondest, the most affectionate parent; nor, should I ever be a mother myself, shall the duties I owe my own child surpass those I promise to perform to them."

Mrs. Villeroy essayed again to speak; she could with difficulty articulate the few words which trembled at her lips, but scarce was heard to pass them, "Bless—my children—Caroline—Villeroy——He waits—God rece——" the word was left unfinished. She closed her eyes for ever.

Lady Fitzwalter was still on her knees; her eyes rested on the inanimate form be-

fore her, but not a tear escaped thence; her grief was in her heart; it was, "passing outward show;" it was slow, solemn, and *fixed.*

"Yes, precious treasures, beloved orphans of an adored brother, of a loved sister," cried she, "at thy breathless remains I repeat my vow. Ye have, indeed, no mother now but me—no father! While Heaven spares my life, I will endeavour to fulfil the place of one."

Lord Fitzwalter at that moment entered the chamber: she arose hastily, and catching his hand——

"Will not you, dear Fitzwalter, prove a father to these little cherubs?" cried she. "Will you not guard their infancy, and watch over their riper years with the attention of a parent? They have no father; will not you supply the place of the beloved one they have lost? See, they smile, as if imploring your future protection. Promise, Fitzwalter; promise before the lifeless

less body of their mother; and through every event of life, that promise must be sacred."

Lord Fitzwalter was stung to the soul; he detested the children; they were the barriers to his fond expectations, and, as such, the objects of his hatred. He did not dare make a promise he never intended fulfilling, but pretending to be moved beyond the power of articulation, hastily applied his handkerchief to his eyes,

"To hide the tears he did not shed;"

and instantly hurried out of the room.

Lady Fitzwalter, whose innate goodness of mind ever prevented her doubting it in another, beheld his apparent emotion with concern; she could not bear to see him suffer a moment's uneasiness, but quickly following, endeavoured, in suppressing her own feelings, to soothe his well-affected

grief, which he dissembled so artfully, as to have all the signs of sincerity with it.

The children had been baptized the day after they were born, by the name of their parents—"Augustus," and "Marianne;" and the last sad office being paid the remains of Mrs. Villeroy, Lady Fitzwalter had the west end of the Castle appropriated for the nursery, it being rather distant from the family part of it, and of course out of the way; and her Ladyship would not permit either of the infants to be removed from it. A second nurse was provided, to whom was given the little girl, and the boy remained with Catherine. Each nurse had her separate apartments, of which Margarette, and, at his own request, Guilford, were the principal superintendants; while Lady Fitzwalter, visiting them regularly, had the dear satisfaction of witnessing their improvement under her own immediate care and inspection.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

"Where'er my lonely course I bend,
Their image shall my steps attend.
Each object I am doom'd to see
Shall bid remembrance picture thee."

THE will of Villeroy, which had been opened and read before the death of his wife, was so particularly made, that even in the case of more than one child being born, it was provided against. The death of Mrs. Villeroy gave to those children the entire of his property, save a few legacies, and an annuity for life of two hundred pounds to Guilford; and should

they die also, the whole came to Lord and Lady Fitzwalter. Three thousand a-year was to be her Ladyship's for life, and at her own sole disposal for ever; the remainder, amounting in the aggregate to upwards of two hundred thousand pounds, was unconditionally theirs. Lord Fitzwalter was appointed guardian; and the management of the fortune during the minority, together with the most minute instructions concerning the education, allowance, and line of conduct of child or children, male or female; and a most earnest appeal to his Lordship from the testator, that he would, in every respect, consider the charge consigned to his care as *his own.*

The children were now nearly eight months old, and it being winter, the time of Lord Fitzwalter's going to London approached, and her Ladyship filled her mind with the pleasing intention of devoting the whole time of his absence to the company of

of the dear little orphans, when there would be no obstacle to prevent her indulging herself with them, when and where she pleased. How great was her disappointment, therefore, and her astonishment, when his Lordship, with rather a more determined manner than he had before assumed on a similar occasion, expressed the necessity of her going there also, for the purpose of being presented, her Ladyship not having appeared at Court since her marriage.

"My dear, good Lord," said she, "I love and respect their Majesties; they are a noble example to their subjects, of conjugal and paternal affection. The King is a good man; he has the blessings and prayers of his people, whose happiness he constitutes, for a long and glorious reign; he has *mine* most sincerely. But think you, my Lord, my dropping a curtsey at St. James's will prove my allegiance more firmly? No, it is as strong here as it could be there. I

have no wish to exhibit in the circle; and the nursery of my children, with the shady groves of Eure Castle, have more charms for me, than the brilliant display of a drawing-room, or the magnificent assemblage of a Court."

"Pshaw," replied he, peevishly, "I hate romance.—Shady groves may do very well in summer, but they do not look very inviting with a white sheet over them; and I suppose you know your nurses well enough to place dependance on them. It is my will you should come, Lady Fitzwalter," continued he, rather peremptorily, "and I do not look for further excuses."

Lady Fitzwalter mildly bowed her head; "I will obey you, my Lord," said she; "it is my duty so to do. I have only one request to make of you, and my obedience and my inclination will go together."

"Name it," said he.

"It is my wish to have the children inoculated, as I dread their taking the infection without it," replied her Ladyship.

"Allow

"Allow me to have them brought with us to London for that purpose, and then I attend your Lordship with pleasure."

"And not without it!" replied he sneeringly. "I am sure I should hold myself indebted for the terms of your Ladyship's compliance; but I have no intention of being encumbered with *brats* every where I go."

"Brats, my Lord!" repeated Lady Fitzwalter, the tears starting into her eyes. "The children of Villeroy, I think, should have from you a more respectful appellation; though even your Lordship, being their uncle and their guardian, *might* have escaped your memory."

"What are children, in general?" said his Lordship, softening his voice, as he perceived she was hurt. "Are not they little brats? I would give the same term to my own, without intending to offend your Ladyship's feelings. And as to taking them with you—as their guardian, I prohibit it. A journey of upwards of two hundred

miles might be attended with more dangerous consequences to infants of their tender age, than the *chance* of catching a disorder, of which there are no symptoms about the place; and when you return, it will be time enough to quiet your fears on that head, by having them inoculated by Doctor Warren: And believe me, my dear Caroline, the air of Eure Castle will be a more powerful restorative to them after, than the foggy atmosphere of London."

Lady Fitzwalter could not but coincide in that opinion. That she could rely on the care of their nurses, and the attentions of Margarette, she believed; but of the watchfulness of Guilford, her Ladyship was certain. Why then feel uneasy at quitting them? it was a feeling she could not account for: But when, with the most earnest expression of entreaty, both in words and action, she conjured the attendants to be vigilant of their charge; when she pronounced a blessing on their infant heads,

and

and kissed, for the last time, their innocent faces, a sensation so acute took possession of her, that only the last parting between Villeroy and her could amount to it; and she rushed from their embraces into the carriage which waited to convey her and Lord Fitzwalter to London, in a state of mind which no language could do justice to, and which, but for the dread of perhaps offending her Lord for ever, would have instantly returned to the Castle, as the only security against her terrors.

Not a week elapsed that did not bring to Lady Fitzwalter a particular statement, from Guilford, of the children, and each succeeding account was more agreeable than the former; but still her Ladyship was not easy; to her the rattling of carriages, and the thundering of knockers, afforded no delightful confusion. She found no amusement in a morning lounge at a west end of the town milliner's—parading her prancing horses up and down the fashionable streets —making

—making noon visits till dark, and nodding a "how d'ye do," without caring whether the person addressed was living or dead the next hour—then at night flying to half a dozen parties in half a dozen hours, finishing her round of dissipation when the sober citizens were thinking of rising, and commencing it again, by taking her *déjeuné* in bed, as *they* sat down to their industriously-earned dinner. To Lady Fitzwalter this life of perpetual bustle was not a life of pleasure; she entered the busy scenes of fashion, because her rank, and her husband's command, obliged her to it; but though her Ladyship mixed in the crowd, she did not indiscriminately follow it; and when the little loved objects of her attachment presented themselves to her thoughts, she could not forbear a sigh at the duty which compelled her to resign their endearing society, for a world as indifferent of her as she was of it.

Lady Fitzwalter perceived the gradual diminution

minution of the higher ranks from amongst the crowded circles, and as they thinned, her heart beat lighter, at the idea of herself being the next to take her *congée*. They only waited the closing of Parliament, which happening very soon after, her Ladyship occupied a few mornings to making little purchases for her dear children, and getting some presents for their nurses: But it was decreed her expectations should be again frustrated, for Lord Fitzwalter presented to her a letter he had received, containing the joint entreaties and request of his aunt, Mrs. Grenville, and her husband, for their company at Deventon, before they returned to the Castle; and as Mrs. Grenville wished most anxiously for an introduction to Lady Fitzwalter, who she had never yet seen, his Lordship informed his Lady it was not possible to avoid the invitation, which would only disoblige his aunt and Mr. Grenville, and he had, therefore, already written an assenting answer.

Lady

Lady Fitzwalter's heart was too full to reply; she thought his Lordship most unkind to her, and, what was infinitely more distressing to her feelings, neglectful of the children, whom he was bound, by ties the most solemn and natural, to be watchful of; but as all argument, she believed, would be useless, her Ladyship had only to acquiesce in silence, and endeavour to tranquillize her mind with the certainty of Guilford's fidelity to the children of his esteemed and lamented master.

But, as if a destiny attended every tender hope of Lady Fitzwalter's life, her Lord, from some offence committed by his own man Nugent, discharged him; and, without any notice of it to her, dispatched a letter to Guilford, requesting that he would attend him in that capacity, till he could have leisure to look out for one of respectability, which his leaving town so soon prevented him doing; and that he would expect to meet him at Deventon.

His

His Lordship was aware that the bequest of Villeroy to this faithful servant had placed him beyond the necessity of servitude, and that his attendance on the children was his own free will, from his attachment to his master's memory; and he was therefore obliged to solicit as a favour, what otherwise, perhaps, the man had refused him.

On their journey to Deventon, Lord Fitzwalter, for the first time, apprized her Ladyship of this circumstance, in a careless easy manner, as if not considering the charge of Guilford as any matter of particular note, but what could be supplied by the vigilance of those left behind at the Castle, nor seeming to notice the emotions of her Ladyship, as though arising from the jarring confusion of her thoughts at this cruel and unlooked-for injury to her repose.

"Does

"Does Guilford come then, my Lord?" faintly uttered Lady Fitzwalter.

"I have desired him to meet me at Deventon," he replied slightly; "I presume he will be there against our arrival."

"Oh, my poor little helpless children!" sighed she through her tears, "you are now indeed deserted.—It was not kind of you, Lord Fitzwalter."

"Upon my soul," cried his Lordship, "those children are a source of perpetual torment. I wish they had"——died with their parents—he was going to say, but restrained himself in time—"been left to some other person's care, and then your Ladyship would not have made your own and my life miserable about them. What can you desire more than their being well?" he added. "And while they continue so, it matters little who is their particular superintendant. I suppose you will allow, that I have as good a right to depend on the fidelity of a woman who has lived all her life in the Castle, as a man who past

two

two or three years in the service of a master, and whose gratitude arises from a liberal, and, I almost think, a foolish bequest of his."

"Guilford was faithful before he received it, my Lord," she replied. "He proved himself so, before he knew his recompense. I would place my life in his hands, and, what is dearer to me, the lives of Villeroy's children. Deprived of him and me, Lord Fitzwalter, I own myself unhappy; for however *safe* they may be, I must still think they want the little trifling minutia of attention which only a careful friend considers."

"Then make yourself perfectly easy on that head, I beg of you, Caroline," answered his Lordship; "and rest satisfied of Margarette's diligence. I am convinced she will not act in any manner contrary to her directions; and you may rely on it, that Guilford will not fail of being particular in them before he quits the Castle. Besides, you will learn, of his own words, a fuller account

account of the children than a letter could convey, which I think will be a sufficient gratification to your mind. So I beg, and request, you will banish unpleasant apprehensions, and do not let my aunt or Mr. Grenville witness any appearance of dissatisfaction about you."

Her Ladyship had but to comply; she assumed a countenance very different to her feelings, but which, throwing over it a soft melancholy, rendered her unusually attractive. Mrs. Grenville contemplated the delicate and interesting beauties of Lady Fitzwalter with a mixture of admiration and respect, which increased to the most lively affection, on a more intimate acquaintance, and discovering her possessed of a mind highly cultivated, and a heart replete with every human virtue. Lady Fitzwalter, though a few years younger than Mrs. Grenville, found in that lady a similarity of sentiment, which, attaching them to each other, united them at last in the strongest friendship.

Guilford

Guilford was at Deventon, agreeable to the summons of Lord Fitzwalter, before his and her Ladyship's arrival there, and from him she received so agreeable a detail of the childrens' improvement, the nurse's care, and Margarette's diligence, that her fears became quieted; she as constantly received accounts from the Castle, which, added to Guilford's dependance of the attendants, reconciled her, in some degree, to the unexpected prolongation of her absence from it, which she now learned was to continue the whole of the summer, Lord Fitzwalter having given his promise to the Deventon family of remaining that length of time with them.

About two months from their being there, his Lordship, speaking of some improvements he intended making in the interior of Eure Castle, it being the favourite spot of Lady Fitzwalter, proposed having some Italian ornaments for it; and as he was particular in the choice of them, and not

not wishing to undertake the journey himself at that time, he fixed on Guilford for the purpose, who had been in Italy before, and was not averse to returning there again to oblige his Lordship. He, therefore, receiving necessary instructions, with Lord Fitzwalter's order to draw on him for the sums requisite to complete the purchases, took his departure from Deventon, early in the beginning of the third month, for the execution of his commission; which his Lordship particularly requested he might not hurry over, but be careful and accurate in his choices.

A few weeks more went over, when Lord Fitzwalter had a letter from the steward at Eure Castle, on the subject of the alterations and improvements to be made there. His Lordship got into a most violent passion, cursed the writer and his stupid head, who had entirely mistaken his directions, and, after venting his rage in all the applicable epithets he could think

of, declared he would go there himself, or might expect to have the whole arrangements destroyed, not to mention the vast expences he would be at, without having his plans finished agreeable to his wishes.

Lady Fitzwalter expressed to her Lord a hope of being allowed to attend him there; but this his Lordship silenced, by observing—that after having promised to remain with the Grenvilles all the summer, it would seem as if *she* was tired of their company, to express any desire of leaving them, and they would consider it a very high offence, particularly as they made it a point to render every thing agreeable to her; but his going they would excuse, it being absolutely indispensable. "Besides," added his Lordship, "my dear Caroline, the Castle will be in such a state with the workmen, there will not be a habitable part for *you*. I shall be obliged to have the children removed to the Wood-house during the time; and you know, my love," he

when the parties were to be united, and the encumbrance freed, with this proviso annexed, that did the young gentleman refuse complying with the agreement, or died before the time, the mortgage was acquitted; and either happening on the lady's side, it rested with the claimant, Lord de Courcy.

Lady Fitzwalter did not much approve of this system, there being so many chances against its terminating agreeably, especially that of the parties knowing the bond made for them; the perversity of human nature might, too probably, create a mutual dislike, which, in any other situation, had never arisen.

Mrs. Grenville told Lady Fitzwalter, that against the possibility of that particular circumstance they would be guarded, as, unless some very peculiar necessity urged its disclosure to them, neither Emily

or

or De Courcy were to be informed of it, till the before-specified termination of his minority.

Lord Fitzwalter was absent a much longer time than he had mentioned his intention of staying, and Lady Fitzwalter watched for his return with the most impatient anxiety. She feared he might be ill, perhaps fatigued, from a too close attendance on the business that brought him to the Castle. Then she feared for the children; they might have been inconvenienced by their removal from it; and, in short, her Ladyship had so many fears, that she was again more restless and unhappy than ever on their account.

The welcome moment, at length, arrived, and Lord Fitzwalter's travelling equipage drove up to the door; her Ladyship flew to meet him—but as instantly traced on his countenance strong marks of dejection.

"Are *you* well, Fitzwalter?" cried she, in an agitated quick voice; "are you well, my dear Lord?—Are the children well?"

"Why this agitation, my love?" said he, kissing her. "I am well."

"And the children!" she hastily exclaimed.

"Have not been well," he answered hesitatingly, "but are ——"

"Are what?" demanded her Ladyship, now more alarmed by his manner. "Are they indeed ill?—And have *you* left them? Great God!" continued she, clasping her hands together, half frantically—"Perhaps they are dead!"

"Come into the house, my dear Caroline," cried his Lordship, gently endeavouring to lead her; "come into the house, and, for heaven's sake, compose yourself."

"Do not talk to me of composure!" cried she, withdrawing her hand forcibly from his, "while you thus continue to torture my feelings. I will not go from this, till

till you tell me the truth. Answer me, Lord Fitzwalter, I implore you, if you would save me from madness. Are the children of Villeroy living?"

. . . . .

His Lordship made no reply, but again tried to conduct her into the house, for she was standing outside the hall-door.

"You do not reply to my question, Lord Fitzwalter!" exclaimed she. "What have I then to conjecture? Oh, merciful Heaven!" she added, laying her hand on her beating heart; "is this sad heart the faithful warner of my miseries?—Does its trembling emotions point them out ere they arrive, to tell me I am decreed to mourn a beloved brother's death, in the untimely fate of the precious deposit he consigned to me?"

Lord Fitzwalter led her within the hall, when she suddenly stopped—"Now tell me all, Fitzwalter," cried she, in a determined tone; "I *will* know it—I demand

it as a right—I entreat it, at your feet, as a favour"—and she sunk on her knees to him. "Do not conceal from me the truth; confirm my dreadful suspicions—Are Villeroy's children dead?"

"Rise, Caroline, my love, I entreat you," said Lord Fitzwalter.

"Never," exclaimed she, "till you reply to my question!"

"Then," said he, "you force me to it—your fears are true."

"What! both?" and her voice faltered—"Both!" repeated she; "Do you say *both*, Fitzwalter?"

"I do," he replied, hesitatingly. "My Caroline, your fears were just.—They fell victims to the fatal disorder you so much apprehended. And I—I," added his Lordship, raising her with one hand, as the other applied a handkerchief to his eyes, "I have to add to your accusation my own, for my obstinate refusal of your request."

"Both!" repeated Lady Fitzwalter, in a manner which too plainly evinced the deep

deep impression incurable grief had already made. "Then I have only to die too: Bury me with them, I charge you.—O, Villeroy! Villeroy!" she cried, "you are lost to me now, indeed."

The truly wretched Lady Fitzwalter was conveyed, nearly lifeless, to her chamber, where the anguish of her mind, preying on her body, confined her, many weeks, in a state, which often threatened the final termination of her woes. She was, however, recovered from that dangerous situation, by the skill of Doctor Hastings, of Exeter, and the unremitting assiduities of Mrs. Grenville; but her mind had received a malady no time could ever cure—a deep and settled melancholy; for never from the moment the childrens' death was announced to her, till the moment of her own, was a smile seen to illuminate her face.

The recovery of Lady Fitzwalter was

slow, and when her strength allowed her to converse a little, she informed her Lord of her fixed and unalterable determination —never to enter the gates of Eure Castle again; in consequence of which the arrangements of it were put a stop to, the servants all dismissed, except Margarette and the steward, and a letter dispatched to Guilford, informing him of the melancholy event which had happened, and countermanding all the commissions given him. His Lordship also particularly mentioned to him, the Castle being *entirely* deserted; and if he should come to London, or wherever Lady Fitzwalter was, he did not think it advisable of him to appear in her presence, as he would remind her Ladyship too forcibly of past occurrences.

Lady Fitzwalter, assured of her beloved childrens' death, had no wish to learn particulars. It was, alas! but too true; and, instead of condemning Lord Fitzwalter, for his denying her request, of having them brought

brought to London with her, for inoculation, her good and pious heart considered it as a decree of Providence, who fated it should be otherwise, and fully acquitted him.

His Lordship briefly informed Mrs. Grenville of the sad event.—The children had been removed to the Wood-house, belonging to the Castle, in consequence of the workmen commencing the improvements; and they, being both weaned, were under the care of one woman, Catherine, to whom he gave strict charge not to enter the village, nor within a stated distance from the place, the small-pox having appeared there. The woman, therefore, was particularly cautious—but her little boy, born nearly the same time as Augustus and his sister, caught the infection, which he communicated to them; while he escaped with only a few trifling marks, the two children of Villeroy fell victims to its destructive malignity. They were such

dreadful objects of its fury, his Lordship added, that he had them both enclosed in one shell, and deposited in the vault belonging to the Castle. Catherine, he also said, had nearly lost her life, at their death, at the idea of her son having been the cause of it. He had, however, convinced her there was no blame could justly attach to a person, who had so scrupulously obeyed his orders, and studied to shun a danger it was fated they should meet, which being now past recall, she must endeavour to be resigned to their loss. His Lordship had, at length, succeeded in reconciling her to herself and her son; and giving her the Wood-house, a sweet retired place, for *their* future residence, as her husband was dead, he also settled on her an annuity for life, to compensate, in some measure, for the loss she sustained by the death of her nurslings.

As soon as Lady Fitzwalter could bear the fatigue of a journey, she quitted Deventon,

ton, at the request of his Lordship, who hoped the gaities of the winter season in London would afford some relief to her mind. Alas! he might have guessed that was beyond this world's power to do. Her Ladyship went, because she would not appear ungrateful for his kind intentions; but it was with regret she parted from Mrs. Grenville, whose tender solicitude, during her illness, had rivetted her Ladyship's affection for her;—she promised to return again in a few months, as she said there was no society could have charms for her, but that of her Lord, and the family of Deventon.

She kept her word; for the confusion of the metropolis ill according with her melancholy, Lord Fitzwalter agreed to her Ladyship's returning to the Grenville's. In London his Lordship took possession of Villeroy's property, in right of his lady; but her own immediate legacy she devoted wholly to charitable purposes, as it was the

sole alleviation her heart could experience, on receiving so fatal an increase to her fortune, and her sorrow.

After two or three periodical visits, between London and Deventon, Lady Fitzwalter, at length, fixed her residence entirely in a small, but elegant, lodge, adjoining the latter, about a year and a half after Mr. Jeffries came into the neighbourhood: And here it was that the infantine sweetness of the gentle Anna, stealing on her affections, meliorated the deep grief which every other resource had failed to do. The affection was equally ardent on both sides; and, as Anna encreased in years, Lady Fitzwalter took pleasure in improving her docile mind, which, adding gratitude to love in her youthful bosom, soon established a friendship between them, as tender as it was permanent.

Lord Fitzwalter, at length, in possession of what he had so anxiously thirsted after, but

what he had hardly ever hoped to attain, on finding his Lady devoted to the tranquil retirement of Deventon, which had *no* attractions for him, spent the greater part of each year in London; and her Ladyship, never presuming to pry into his actions, sought not to know what so frequently took him there; but while assured he was in health, and happy, she neither complained of his absence, nor solicited his return, seeking, in the families of Grenville and Jeffries, and the company of their two little girls, but particularly Anna's, the only comfort her afflicted heart could experience, and the sole happiness she looked forward to in this world.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

" For what are all delights below,
Which fortune, honours, fame bestow,
Unless, with these, we strive to blend
The social solace of a friend ?"

ARLEY.

AS Emily and Anna grew up, their friendship encreased, and, as they advanced to womanhood, the beauty of both young ladies rendered them generally admired. Miss Grenville was rather of the brunette cast, had fine dark eyes, chesnut-coloured hair, a clear complexion, with

white teeth, and a set of features more harmonized by expression than regularity, and which bespoke her always pleased with the world and herself. She was not quite so tall as her *fair* companion, but her figure was graceful and proportioned; her understanding was clear and firm; her manners fascinating and unassuming; her heart good; her mind free from any narrow prejudices; and, in short, Emily Grenville was formed to create admiration, and preserve esteem.

Anna was, in person, the direct opposite of her friend; fair to a degree of fairness, the blue veins were seen through her transparent skin, while the lively blush of health, glowing on her cheek, the waving ringlets of her luxuriant fair tresses, the tender expression of her mild blue eyes, the enchanting smile of her coral lips, and the Madona character of her countenance, added to a neck and shoulders of the most perfect symmetry, and a tall elegant

gant figure, gave to her an appearance almost celestial. Her mind was as gentle as her form was beautiful; sensibility was the predominant feature of it, which was so marked, that her friends often dreaded the effects of it on her heart, if, at some future period, it should be her lot to place it unworthily. The sorrows of Lady Fitzwalter deeply interested Anna, as she advanced in years; nor could she behold that lady without feeling her tenderness, and her susceptibility augmented at each succeeding interview: she sympathized in her Ladyship's grief, she partook of her sorrows, and she soothed her melancholy, by the gentleness of her expressions, and the delicacy of her attentions: they seemed necessary to each other's happiness.—Happiness! alas! Lady Fitzwalter knew it only by name; happiness had fled her bosom many years; but in the society of Anna, if she was not happy, she was, at least, resigned.

Emily

Emily Grenville had attained her eighteenth year, when it was announced by Lord de Courcy, in a letter to her father, his Lordship's intention of paying a visit to the Deventon family, in company with his son, who was a student at Cambridge; and that they would be there very soon, as young De Courcy was now nineteen, and was shortly to quit College, in order to make a tour of two years, and wished very much to renew his acquaintance with Mr. Grenville's family before he left England, whom he had not seen since he was a boy. "And," added Lord de Courcy, in his letter, "I am anxious to indulge this wish, as being necessary to our future hopes, that the young pair should have an opportunity of cultivating a friendly intimacy; and, amiable as they both are, I trust a more tender attachment, which, at their ages, is more than probable, may be formed."

Mr. Grenville was highly pleased at this visit, as so essential was the point in question

question to his family, that he could have wished to make his daughter acquainted it, thinking it would be a more powerful incitement for her to exert her agreeable talents towards conquering the heart of her destined husband. But, again, delicacy forbade that a father should urge his daughter to form a deliberate attack on the affections of any man, even though that man was, of all others, the most to be approved of; besides, did he mention the subject to her, it would be breaking an agreement jointly promised by the parents of both; and taking all things into consideration, Mr. Grenville found it more advisable to maintain a profound silence on the subject, and merely speak of the gentlemens' visit in general terms. He, laughingly, told the two girls, of the handsome beau they might expect shortly to see at Deventon, adding—"I hope you'll not be violent rivals; he can have but one of you, and ——"

"That one," cried Emily, pulling herself

self up, with an affected self-approving look, "will be me, papa,"

"Don't flatter yourself," replied her father, in the same good-humoured strain; "I think my gentle Anna, here, stands the fairest chance for the prize."

"I never flatter myself, papa," answered Emily; "I find enough to do that, without my taking the trouble of it: And if the creature wants *taste,* he'll certainly overlook me."

"Saucy girl," said Mr. Grenville, tapping her cheek, "I almost hope he may, if only to mortify you."

"But I'm determined on not being mortified," she cried, laughing; "for if the fellow is worth the trouble, I'll assail him with my very best looks; and if he is not, I freely resign the conquest to Anna."

"Thank you, Emily," said Anna, smiling at her; "but in that case I may not, perhaps, think it worth accepting."

"That's right, Anna," cried Mr. Grenville; "have as much spirit as she; only, my

my dear girls," he added, half seriously, "don't get rivals in earnest."

"Indeed, papa," replied Emily, assuming a graver tone, "were Anna a Duchess, and I parading on foot, I would think her deserving of it; nor should I feel any uneasiness at the splendour of her Grace's equipage, unless, indeed, it happened to splash my white petticoats as I walked past it."

"My dearest Emily," cried Anna, "did such an unexpected exaltation ever attend me, if you did not partake of it, I should ill deserve to be its mistress."

The elegant equipage of Lord De Courcy announced, soon after this conversation, his Lordship's and the unexpected hero's arrival. Anna was not then at Deventon, and Emily felt reluctant at the necessity of being introduced to them without the presence of her friend. She hastily dispatched a note to Mr. Jeffries for her, *commanding* her to come over without delay;

lay; but this command Anna did not immediately obey, and Miss Grenville was obliged to appear without her.

Mrs. Grenville presented her daughter to Lord de Courcy and his son; his Lordship was charmed with Emily, and asserted the privilege of his age to salute her cheek. "And, my son," said he, taking De Courcy's hand, "let me hope the friendship which has for years subsisted between our families may be for ever preserved and strengthened, by an agreeable, and, I doubt not, in time, an equally amicable intercourse between you and the lovely daughter of my worthy friends."—His Lordship joined their hands together.

"I shall consider myself highly honoured, and most gratefully favoured," replied De Courcy, "in being permitted a share of Miss Grenville's friendship; and hope, from this moment, she will allow me to claim it in the light of an affectionate brother."

"With pleasure, Sir," answered Emily,

"do

do I accept the distinction. The son of my father's friend will, I hope, find me deserving the kind appellation he bestows."

De Courcy thought Miss Grenville what every person, who saw her, did also—a lovely, amiable girl, possessed of more beauty than many women he had seen, and less vain of it than *any* he had ever known. He esteemed her highly, but he felt no sentiment of a more tender nature invading his quiet; nor had he the vanity of many fine young men, to wish to attract the particular notice of so elegant a woman.

De Courcy, without being handsome, was prepossessing;—his figure was fine, and his face manly; but his turn of mind did not coincide with the livelier one of Emily Grenville, it being rather of a grave cast, though, by no means, gloomy or dissatisfied. He loved cheerful society, was fond of dancing, could laugh heartily at an agreeable story, and was an enthusiastic admirer of music. But then he preferred

ferred the charms of the country to the bustle of the town; was fond of reading, and enjoyed a moon-light ramble; at a tale of distress, his heart melted, and to the soft expression of melancholy it became subdued. His attentions to Miss Grenville were such as she deserved, and such as he had offered; and while his admiration and respect of her were alike blended, he felt conscious to himself of her not being the woman to awaken a tenderer sentiment.

A slight cold of Mrs. Jeffries prevented Anna's attending her friend Emily's summons, till the third day after receiving it, when she made her appearance at Deventon-house. Never had she looked more lovely, or more interesting; the walk had flushed her cheek with a crimson glow, her bright ringlets flowed carelessly on her snowy forehead, while her sweet blue eyes, beaming with the serenity of her pure mind, were half shaded by a white chip hat, tied loosely under the chin, by a knot

knot of the same colour. She entered the drawing-room—Emily flew towards her.

"My dear, dear Anna!" she exclaimed, taking her hand, "welcome once more amongst us. I have not been myself during your absence, but now I see my second self, I am again Emily Grenville."

De Courcy thought she never appeared to so much advantage, as in this short display of genuine friendship, to the loveliest of human beings; it was a proof of the native excellence of her heart, and he esteemed her more than before.

Emily presented her to Lord de Courcy, and then, turning to his son,—"This," said she, "is the sister of my heart; I introduce her to you as such; any further claim to your good opinion I need not bespeak; her own appearance will tell you how far she is entitled to it."

"If I am to judge by appearances, Miss

Grenville," he replied, "this lady must command more than the good opinion of every man who has the happiness of beholding her."

Anna curtsied, with a blushing modesty, to his compliment.

"The best title I have to your favour, Sir," she answered, "arises from the friendship with which Miss Grenville honours me."

The heart of De Courcy had met its counterpart; and the elegant, gentle Anna became its mistress from that moment: but he was not of a nature easily to betray his sentiments; and a secret suspicion he entertained of his father's wishes, without having the most remote idea of their true source, made him doubly cautious to conceal them. He, therefore, divided his attentions equally between the lovely friends; nor could the most accurate observer trace,

from his outward deportment, the particular distinction his heart had made, except what his timidity and hesitation might express to the fair object of it, when chance left him in her company alone. But Anna was too diffident of herself, to remark the conquest she had made, and too fully acquainted with her true origin, if she even did notice it, to indulge hopes, which the knowledge of her miserable extraction must inevitably render fallacious. She could not, however, regard De Courcy with indifference; his manners and his address were calculated to engage her esteem; but whether her sentiments for him were actuated by love or friendship, she had yet to learn, for at present they were undefinable to herself.

The company of Lady Fitzwalter was frequently added to the charming circle at Deventon, and, with Mr. and Mrs. Jeffries, formed a society, where, if every bosom felt not happy, every heart in it at least warmed with the sincerest friendship to each

each other. Her Ladyship appeared as the beautiful remains of a fine structure, more injured by want of care than length of time; the building still posses·d its pristine form, but neglect had suffered the weeds to creep through it, which shaded, but could not entirely conceal the original ornaments.

The sentiments Lady Fitzwalter inspired, were not alone respect for her rank, or pity for her sorrows, but a veneration for her virtues—virtues which had instructed her to bend her soul in pious resignation to the will of her great Master, and taught her to bear the neglect of her earthly one without repining.

Lord Fitzwalter had, of late years, absented himself from her more than ever, sometimes for a lapse of many months, and seldom prolonging his stay with her beyond a week or two. His temper was grown morose, peevish, and fretful. Though in

possession of his dearest wish, he did not appear contented; and while rolling in his golden passion, he seemed restless, wretched, and miserable.

Lord de Courcy had known Lady Fitzwalter when the bright morning of her days promised unclouded sunshine. Ah! how different were they now! Unexpected storms had arisen, darkness had obscured the fair horizon, and scarcely was she sensible of its enlivening rays, ere the fair prospect disappeared from her view, and left her for ever cheerless and deserted.

It was with pleasure his Lordship renewed his acquaintance with this lovely daughter of affliction; yet, as he did, he avoided all retrospection which could recall distressing reflections to her Ladyship's mind, carefully shunning every conversation which could relate to her brother, with whom he had been on very friendly terms.

Young

Young De Courcy almost worshipped her; he regarded her as something more than mortal; and the attachment his heart had formed for the fair Anna, became more ardent, as he witnessed their tender affection, and beheld his beloved essaying, by the most delicate attention, to soothe the sorrows her own gentle bosom sympathized in.

Lady Fitzwalter contemplated the youthful trio with a melancholy pleasure; they brought to her mind the dear infants of Villeroy, whom she had once hoped to have seen like them. But, oh! that hope was for ever lost, for in her own sad heart they only existed. The tears would steal down her pallid cheek, as busy recollection crossed her memory, when, unwilling to disturb the sweet harmony of the happy party, she would hastily retire from it, and relieve the deep anguish of her bosom, by embalming, with the chrystal emblem of

her sorrows, the lamented objects entombed there.

While Anna's heart unknowingly attached itself to De Courcy, the candour of her mind admitted no mistrustful jealousies of her beautiful friend, whose charms she fancied could not fail of attracting his. Had it been really so, she would not have suffered any narrow selfish envy at the happiness of Emily; and believing it possibly the case, she was exempt from every baneful passion.

Emily watched the looks of Anna as they were directed to De Courcy, and imagined from them, there was something more concealed than met the eye; and when they retired, at night, she threw herself into a chair.

"Heigh, oh! my poor heart!" exclaimed she, with an affected sigh, and turning round

round with quickness—"What do you think of young De Courcy, Anna?"

"Think!" cried she, deeply blushing, "I think ——"

"I suppose you don't exactly know what your thoughts are, my sweet friend," said Emily, laughingly.

"I do," replied Anna, recovering from the surprise of the question, and imagining it to proceed from a wish of Emily's to hear her opinion of a person she was more than commonly interested about—"I think De Courcy's mind amiable and engaging; his manners more than pleasing; and his person ——"

"Oh, his person!" cried Emily, hastily interrupting her—"an Apollo's; and *sometimes* not unlike his carved representative. What a charming Arcadian swain he'd make, weaving chaplets of the corn-flowers for his mistress's fair ringlets, (yours suppose, as being that colour) and twisting the straws into true-lovers knots—reading for her beside some purling stream—Let me

see, what should he read?—Oh, aye, Thomson's Seasons—'The lovely young Lavinia.'

Emily looked at Anna—she perceived tears in her eyes.

"My dear girl," she added, affectionately taking her hand, "forgive me; I am a strange rattle, you know, but I would not injure the feelings of my beloved Anna intentionally."

Emily really thought she had done so, by speaking so whimsically of De Courcy.

"Ah, Emily!" she replied, "you have quoted a subject which touches them most accutely, for "fortune smil'd deceitful on *my* birth."

Miss Grenville knew nothing of that; for, as before mentioned, it was not known what her relative situation was to her friends,

friends, or whether, in fact, she was any relation of theirs or not.

"Hang fortune!" exclaimed Emily, "if it can make any distinction in friendship. Were I as poor as a church mouse, it would not grieve me, so long as my friends remained."

"Would you love me still, Emily," asked Anna, "were I friendless?"

"My dear Anna, what a question!" said Emily, tenderly, to her—"It implies a doubt of my constancy. I'll not answer it."

"Then I'll put it to the proof," answered she. "I am not, in any degree, related to my dear, inestimable friends, Mr. or Mrs. Jeffries."

"Well, that's of no consequence," replied Emily; "good friends are better than bad relations."

"I am the child of misery," she continued, "taken, by them, from want and

beggary, and made what I am, by their benevolence."

"You have raised *them* in my esteem," cried Miss Grenville, "but you have not lowered *yourself* in it."

"My father," added Anna, "I know nothing of exactly, but I believe his occupation to have been as mean as his origin. My mother"—she could not proceed, tears interrupted her.

"And pray," said Emily, who perceiving how much Anna was affected, wished to make light of a subject, which had no way impressed her, but to rivet more strongly her affection—"And pray, my dear Anna, what does all this information tend to? I never knew your father or mother, and I care very little whether they graced the circles of St James's or St. Giles's. I never was in either place, but I understand them to be the two extremes of London life. Their daughter is my friend, and as long as she allows me to be hers, it is not the trifling

trifling chance of high or low birth, can, or will, make an alteration in my sentiments. Let the parents of my beloved Anna be what they might, *I* derive more honour from *her* friendship, than *she* does from mine."

"Noble, generous Emily!" cried Anna, throwing herself into the extended arms of her friend; "you have relieved my mind from an oppression which has long troubled it. I often wished to disclose to you the truth, but I dreaded forfeiting your esteem.—Ah! say again, I have not."

"Yes," cried Emily, pressing her affectionately to her bosom—"Yes, my Anna, and again, and again, and a thousand times again. Have we not lived together since childhood—have not the same amusements which pleased you, delighted me—the same griefs that drew forth your tears, filled my eyes—the same lessons, the same plays, and the same wishes, filled our juvenile days; and think you, my sweet girl, that, forgetting those dear scenes of our

infantine life, and the tender intercourse which has ever subsisted, I should drive from my recollection every past happiness, and banish from my heart the beloved playfellow and friend who constituted it, for a cause which might have equally been my own, and which Providence, and not herself, decreed should be?—Oh, no! I would be unworthy the title of a friend, did it, in any degree, abate my affection for you; and the degradation *you* seem to feel, by birth, *my* soul alone would be stamped with."

Anna's tears flowed on the bosom of the tender friend, who thus, so kindly and so generously, calmed her doubts; and she experienced a moment of the most perfect felicity, at receiving these incontestible proofs of her continued friendship.

"Come," continued Emily, "come, my Anna, dry up those tears; I do not like to see a cloud on your face, particularly when

when there is no cause for it; and rest assured that the communication you have made shall descend with me to the grave; nor will it ever pass my lips, unless drawn from them by yourself."

"Ah!" cried Anna, with a heavy sigh, "it may be known to every one yet. Does my father or my mother exist, may they not demand me?—have they not a right? who shall dare to withhold me from them? O, Emily, I dread a moment of that kind, when the infamy of my origin would subject me to the contempt of the world."

"I'll tell you how to avoid it, in some measure," said Miss Grenville, endeavouring to raise her spirits.

"How, my dearest Emily?" exclaimed Anna; "tell me, and how joyfully will I embrace the means!"

"I don't doubt but you might," replied Emily, archly. "Get a husband, and then, though they even should demand you, his claim will take place of theirs."

Anna

Anna smiled at her friend's proposal; but it was a smile which indicated a doubt, whether the design it was intended to frustrate might not prove a prevention to her ever having one, as she was determined, if ever such an offer was made her, to be equally candid as at present.

The two elegant young friends appeared as if this disclosure of Anna's had served to entwine them more firmly in the endearing bonds which had before united them. Anna's heart expanded in gratitude to the generous-minded Emily, who sought every opportunity of evincing to her, that no change of situation or circumstances could diminish the friendship she vowed, and the affection she felt.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

"Look down, blest shades, and Oh, with pity see
Where sad remembrance lifts each thought to thee."

ELEGY.

EURE Castle had remained many years without being visited, or even enquired into by its owner. The grounds had been left uncultivated, the cottages deserted, and the old pair who inhabited it were almost forgotten by Lady Fitzwalter. Yet, whenever she turned her thoughts that way, it reminded her of the direful events which had so rapidly attended her entrance into it; and her sad soul sickened at the recollection of what her hopes had *then* been,

and how soon, how fatally they were destroyed.

Her Ladyship had once or twice spoken of its romantic beauties to her young companions, and described its situation in such descriptive colourings, that a curiosity, natural to their age, excited in them an ardent wish to visit it; and in a conversation between themselves on the subject, they suggested the possibility of accomplishing it, by expressing their desire to young De Courcy, and, with his assistance, engage the senior part of their friends to form a party there. This plan was no sooner started than resolved on: De Courcy was applied to, and his immediate compliance, with the certainty he gave of his father's also agreeing to it, convinced them there would be no opposition made by Mr. or Mrs. Grenville against their pursuing their favourite plan. De Courcy, anxious to oblige the two charming girls, and no less desirous of visiting a place so calculated

lated to indulge his own taste for the sublime, mentioned it first to his Lordship, who, with very great pleasure, entered into a scheme at once so innocent and so gratifying to the fair friends.

The subject was started by Lord de Courcy the first moment that Lady Fitzwalter's absence from the party allowed him, without risking her Ladyship's sensibility being affected by a too sudden mention of it; adding—

"If you do not wish to enlarge our party by your company, my good friends, I will go as guardian and attendant to the girls; while Henry takes on him the more noble title of champion and knight."

"And I think they will require both," replied Mr. Grenville, smiling. "Every old castle has a ghost, you know; and if we are to believe the legends of this one, there are many *less* substantial beings in it than the old couple who reside there."

"I own,"

"I own," said Mrs Grenville, "I would not venture in it; but if the girls have courage to enter, I have no objection, under your Lordship's protection."

"My dear mamma," cried Emily, "you may rely on it, it is not a trifle can terrify *me*. I am not to be frightened by airy substances; I must have occular demonstration before I become a *true believer*; and even then, it is probable I would doubt the evidence of my sight, from the incredulity of my senses."

"You have more courage than wit, I apprehend," said her father, good humouredly.

"And, my dear papa," replied she, "as long as my courage don't scare my wits, I shall defy all supernatural attacks on it."

"Yet you have other inconveniences to encounter," said Mrs. Grenville, "against which you will not be able to guard; I understand there is not a part of the Castle habitable; neither do I suppose you will find

find any convenience for sleeping, or even any furniture."

"No matter," replied Emily; "I will obviate that difficulty, by turning the coach into a bed-chamber for Anna and me, and making our table under the old trees, with a concert of rooks above our heads, to entertain us by their delightful harmony."

They all laughed at this judicious arrangement of hers, which proved her determined on hazarding all obstacles.

"But what are the gentlemen to do?" asked Mr. Grenville. "You have secured Anna and yourself at nights, but how are they to be accommodated?"

"It will be their business to watch us," replied Emily; "and what a charming opportunity for exhibiting their prowess and their gallantry, parading up and down to guard the "sleeping beauties in the wood;" fighting, like modern Quixotes, the visionary enemies from the enchanted castle, and,

and, with the din of rattling arms, sweeping before them, in legions, the crows and owls of the forest."

No further objection being made, the visit to Eure Castle was decided on; the party to consist of the two young ladies, with Lord and Mr. de Courcy, accompanied by as few attendants as were merely necessary; and the journey to commence the beginning of the ensuing week.

It was requisite that Lady Fitzwalter should be made acquainted with it, and Anna undertook the task of informing her of their intended visit. As she was aware how much the mention of that place revived unhappy thoughts to her Ladyship, she broke the communication with the utmost gentleness.

"To the Castle!" sighed Lady Fitzwalter; you are going to Eure Castle. Oh, that name! It is fatal to my peace. There I parted

I parted last from Villeroy—there died my husband, wife—and there," she added, raising her humid eyes, "and there, there was torn from me every remaining joy."

"Why," cried Anna, participating in the tears of Lady Fitzwalter, "why did I ever mention it! Why form a wish to go there! Ah! forgive me, dear and respected friend; I have opened afresh the wounds of your heart, and my own severely condemns me for it."

"And wherefore should it, my Anna?" said her Ladyship, endeavouring to restrain her emotions at beholding the sweet girl so much affected; "you have nothing to condemn yourself for. Ah no, my kind young friend, you who have so often calmed the rising tumults of my sad bosom, would not, I know, intentionally wring it. But I am foolishly weak, my love, and cannot hear unmoved the mention of a place in which I once hoped to have spent years of happiness. Heaven did not will it should be so; *its* decrees are all-wise and all-gracious, and

and, [illegible]who rules the world,

[illegible]d so; and the meek ex-benign countenance, as [illegible]ad, proved the devout fervour of [illegible]eart to that gracious Power, whose supporting hand had enabled her to bear up against her afflictions.

After a pause of a few moments, her Ladyship resuming her serenity, enquired when this visit was to take place?

Anna mentioned the time fixed.

"I am afraid," said Lady Fitzwalter, "you will meet but wretched accommodations there; a place which has not for so many years been noticed, cannot be supposed in a situation to receive such visitors. There is one part of it, however, I should imagine to be still in tolerable repair, the west wing; and if you are really determined on

on the excursion," added her Ladyship, "I will write to Robert, the old steward, to have some preparations made. I do not know whether my Lord had not some of the furniture removed; but even so, I should think there can be sufficient collected together to suffice your wants, though, I fear, not to establish your comforts."

Anna replied, that being resolved on going, they had already made up their minds to be satisfied as to the accommodations; for judging the place to be very much out of repair, they did not look for, or expect to find, any better situation in the Castle than what the old couple there were themselves in possession of.

"Then," replied her Ladyship, "my letter will precede you a few days; and though it may not be successful enough to procure for you a splendid reception (such as Eure Castle in past days afforded), it will at least ensure you the best it can at present

sent give. Besides, I think it will be right to send some notice of it to the two old inhabitants, who might otherwise be alarmed at your appearance. And when you are going, my Anna," continued she again, relapsing into a mournful strain, "going to the spot where my happiness shone for a day, then fled for ever, 'and like the baseless fabric of a vision'——Oh yes," she added, pausing with solemnity, "it left a wretched wreck behind!——" .

"Dearest, dearest Lady Fitzwalter," cried Anna, affectionately kissing her hand, "the subject is too painful to you; we will wave it for the present; only let me request, if it is your Ladyship's wish to announce our going to the old couple, that you will permit me to be your amanuensis; it will be less afflicting to deliver me your sentiments in brief, than write them yourself."

"Kind, considerate Anna," said Lady Fitzwalter, "I accept you as such. But as I am now on the subject, my love, I will continue

continue what I was about to say to you. When my beloved Villeroy went to France to be married, the only pleasure I experienced was in the frequent receipt of his letters; and these, together with some from his wife, and a few others of no material consequence, I locked up in the private drawer of a cabinet in my reading-closet, when I quitted the Castle—never to return to it." She sighed deeply. "I have not had an opportunity of getting them from thence since, and the one which now offers I embrace, with a melancholy satisfaction of its giving again into my hands the dear and last mementoes of my loved brother's affection."

"How can you be certain," said Anna, "that the cabinet your Ladyship speaks of yet remains there?"

"Because it was not of sufficient value, I think," she answered, "to be removed. Indeed I cannot with certainty affirm, whether the Castle does not remain as I left it. I have only my own conjecture for think-

ing some of the valuable furniture has either been removed or sold by Lord Fitzwalter; but, at all events, the cabinet I mention is, I believe, coeval with the building, and, as a family relick, too much esteemed to be disturbed. There are several little drawers and recesses in it," continued her Ladyship; "but only the one I allude to I locked, on depositing those letters there, the key of which I will give you, and old Margarette will shew you the place. Bring me all the papers you find there, my dear Anna; and though I should not even venture to read them, it will be a pleasing reflection, that they are once again in my possession."

Lady Fitzwalter took a small key from her escritoir; it bore the marks of age, for it was encrusted with rust. Her Ladyship dropped a tear on it, as she presented it to Anna.

"Take it, Anna," said she; "and now, if you

you will have the goodness to write the letter, we will then cease the subject, for I feel it is indeed a painful one to my poor agitated heart."

Anna kissed the dear hand which presented it, and gave a sigh, as she reflected, that though near the accomplishment of her wish, its pleasure was overcast by the unhappiness of her who, as the mistress of Eure Castle, would never more enter it.

However acutely Lady Fitzwalter felt each trifling cause which struck the tender chord of her afflictions, she knew it to be unavailing, and struggled to suppress the rising emotions; but unfortunately for herself, her feelings were too delicately strung to admit the possibility of subduing them. Had Lord Fitzwalter, with the kind attentions she might expect from a husband, sought to mitigate her grief, by even an appearance of affection, if he did not feel it in reality, or, generously respecting the

memories of persons so dear to her, lamented them with a decent sorrow—had he bestowed on her a reasonable share of his society, for she was too generous to expect it all, or even when he did give her his company, had he kindly endeavoured to sooth her wounded bosom—Lady Fitzwalter would have exerted every endeavour to prove her gratitude to him, and by struggling against her feelings, had probably in time blunted the keen edge of their sensibility: But, left to herself, a prey to the corroding grief which gnawed her heart, neglected, deserted, and perhaps despised by the only being on earth to whom she should apply for comfort, and by a man too, who revelled in the consequences of what had occasioned it, she suffered every pang a feeling heart could experience, and the indulgence of its sorrows was the sole luxury it found.

Unhappy Caroline! There was but one man could treat thee with such marked unkindness!

kindness! that one thy husband—and the gentle character of thy soul, which endeared thee to every other creature, was the sole and only cause of thy being abandoned by Lord Fitzwalter.

His Lordship had not been seen near Deventon for many months, nor could any person there tell where he was; indeed no one took the pains of learning; for as her Ladyship seldom reverted to his name, they would not enquire of her; and while she was adored by every individual, *he* was the theme of general dislike, and often general execration.

Lady Fitzwalter, recovered from the first emotions the hasty intelligence of Anna had created, felt how little cause there had been for them, and was ashamed of a weakness nearly infantine. She therefore collected her spirits sufficiently to enable her to renew the conversation with the party at Deventon; and of her Ladyship they learned

many particulars belonging to the Castle, which, when there, could not fail of interesting them.

As the two young ladies, Emily and Anna, had never been beyond the environs of Deventon neighbourhood, at least during their own recollection, (for Anna *might* have been a traveller, for aught she knew), Lord de Courcy proposed stopping a few days at Bath and Bristol, to partake of some of the amusements there, and view the curiosities of the latter; and likewise mentioned his intention of visiting every place of note they passed near during their journey. The girls were particularly delighted with this plan; Emily declared to their faces—he was a dear old soul, worth a hundred such posing book-worms as his son, who was only fit to chop logic and extract the square root; and was his Lordship but a *few* years less advanced in life, it was a doubt to her that she would not make a bold attempt to place a coronet on her head.

The

The young ladies were so busy, and so engaged talking of, and making preparations for their excursion, that they had neither leisure or inclination to attend to any thing else. Mr. and Mrs. Jeffries were uncommonly delighted at beholding the avidity with which their sweet-loved Anna entered into it; for her turn of mind being so much more serious than in general is found in girls of her age, it was with peculiar satisfaction they saw her occupy herself in a display of unusual good spirits, and an appearance of pleasure, which lighted up her face in constant smiles.

The happy day arrived, when Miss Grenville's state bed-chamber, alias Lord de Courcy's coach, drove up to the door, about eight o'clock of a glorious fine morning, in the month of June. The two girls sprang into it, with happy hearts, and hearts as innocent as happy. They were followed by Lord de Courcy and his son. The young ladies took no female attendants, and, exclusive of the drivers, no more

than two domestics on horseback. They waved their hands to the family assembled at the door.

"Beware of the ghosts," cried out Mr. Grenville to Emily.

"Fear not, papa," she hastily replied, as the postillions cracked their whips; "I shall treat them with all imaginable respect, if they afford me any opportunity of exhibiting my country manners."

The party proceeded through Exeter, Bridgewater, and to Bath, where they halted a few days to look round them. They went to the rooms, refreshed themselves in the baths, and cooled themselves with the water—Drove to Glastonbury, not to pluck the celebrated Christmas thorn, but to view the famous ancient pyramids there; but the inscriptions were too much defaced, for even their deep-learned *Cantab* companion to satisfy their curiosity, farther than by seeing them—From thence to

to visit the celebrated monuments of Stanton Drew, and Stone-Henge, on Salisbury Plain, supposed by some persons to have been placed there at the general formation of nature, but by others thought the vestiges of druidical superstition—Drove to Mendip Hills, to see the prodigious cave called Ochy Hole, and dipped their hands in its wells—When after seeing every thing worthy of note in Somersetshire, they continued their route on to Bristol. Here they surveyed the famous cavities of Poole and Elden; entered the celebrated Peak, but not daring to explore it to the extremity, they could not form any just opinion of its interior wonders. The girls made purchases of Derbyshire spars, and bought Bristol *diamonds*, as presents for some of their favourite smart country lasses about Deventon. They next proceeded on to Stratford on Avon, where the party paid their homage over the grave which contained the ashes of the great and immortal poet Shakespeare; entered the ruins of an

old house there, wherein this eldest son of genius was born, and which is still inhabited by an old woman, who makes her livelihood by shewing it, and exhibiting to the venerators of merit the remains of a wooden arm chair, partially nailed together, as having been the favourite seat of this unrivalled bard. The next place they halted in was Coventry, where Emily would take "a peep" at the hero of curiosity's figure, so well known by the name of "Peeping Tom," laughingly exclaiming at the same time, "She was giving convincing proofs of her meriting a place at his right hand."

At Nottingham the ladies bought silk stockings and lace veils, the manufactory of the town—Stopped at Doncaster to enjoy a few hours walking through its sweet environs, and partake of its friendly and hospitable entertainments—Viewed the remarkable well at Wigan, in Lancashire, to whose water, when bubbling, if a candle

is applied, it will blaze with the flame of spirituous liquor; and frequently, when the air is temperate, will continue burning many hours; where the poor people often boil their potatoes, and cook their dinner over it, at the same time that the water itself receives no heat, but preserves throughout its natural frigidity.

They shortly after entered the old and justly-esteemed city of York; and it being Saturday, the weekly market-day, the town was thronged with persons who flocked thither to supply themselves and families from its cheap and plentiful produce.

They immediately repaired to the Castle, situated at the farther end of the town, and just adjoining it—one of the noblest and finest constructed prisons in England, affording health and comfort to the unfortunate persons confined there. They entered, by a large gate, into a superb square, whose buildings of white stone, both uni-

form and elegant, contained the different allotments of the prisoners: one was for the debtors, another for the criminals, a third for occasional use, and the fourth was appointed for the women, who were not suffered to be lodged with the men. To each of these was a cistern for water, which they understood to be plentifully used towards promoting the cleanliness of the prison; and a large tract of ground, railed in from the square, was appropriated for the benefit of air and exercise. To the right of it stood the Session-house, whose interior corresponded with the outward appearance; the jury-room they found particularly deserving of notice, being both spacious and convenient.

The great philanthropist Howard, the debtor's friend, the criminal's solace, the prisoner's hope, on whose heart the angel of humanity stampt her attributes in divinest characters, speaking of York jail, allowed, that in the attention and care manifested

nifested to those unfortunate beings whose wretched pursuits brought them before the tremendous, yet necessary tribunal of earthly justice, there could be *no* reform.

The next object of attention was the *Minster*, to view which our party repaired early on Monday morning, having but partially seen it the day before, at their attendance on Divine worship. It was originally a monastery belonging to the Danes, and had been three different times burnt down, without its ever being positively known to what cause to attribute those conflagrations; one only was supposed to have been occasioned by lightning. The last rebuilding of this noble pile finished it in a style at once bold, magnificent, and sublime. The architecture is ancient gothic, with pointed battlements and turrets. On entering the great door, from the street called "Stone Gate," the first object which caught their eye was the immense extent of the aisle, five hundred feet in length, paved with large squares

squares of a white and greyish marble, the roof above arched, and supported by ranges of clustered pillars. The number of windows, composed of the finest stained glass, next attracted their attention; and being so perfectly clean, the minutest figure in them appeared transparent. That over the entrance door exhibited King Herod and the Jews seeking our Saviour to put him to death; and near it, the massacre of the little children from one to three years old. Opposite to this was represented in another, the birth of Christ, with the stable and manger where he was laid. Over a smaller door, he appeared expiring on the cross, with Mary Magdalen and his mother kneeling at the foot of it; and at a distance from this, was seen Joseph preparing the tomb, hewn from the rock, for the reception of the body. The different Apostles, with their emblems, filled up many of the large casements, and in smaller ones were represented the figures of various crowned heads. In a window, unfortunately placed in so

obscure

obscure a part of the aisle, that it would often escape observation, were it not particularly pointed out, though the second in that place most deserving of it, the glass was so exquisitely wrought together, that it had the appearance of the finest Dresden lace; and while it drew forth admiration, it excited astonishment at the wonderful execution of its artist.

On entering the Cathedral, the great window, over the communion-table, first attracted observation, being ninety feet by thirty-six, and containing the history of the Old and New Testament, the Creed, and Ten Commandments; yet what rendered it no less deserving attention was, their understanding it to have been the work of five sisters.

But the greatest curiosity they observed here, consisted in a plate of crown glass, placed over the Cathedral door, through which, when the sun shone on the opposite window,

window, the whole of it was reflected so accurately in minature, that every colour was visible, and the words as distinct as on the window itself.

They next proceeded to the Chapter-house, an immense octagon building, with pointed casements of corresponding stained glass; but it being at the time undergoing some repairs, the party did not stop to make minute observations.

From this place they proceeded to examine the sumptuous monuments erected to the memory of many a noble character, whose names, emblazoned on the marble slab, told of the deeds they had performed, and the achievements they had won, when, in defence of the British lion, or the British flag, they boldly fought their country's cause, and triumphantly lived, or gloriously died, in support of it.

They next continued their researches down

down a flight of eight or ten steps, on the right of the Cathedral, curiously ornamented on each side with workmanship, both in wood and stone, descending by them to a celebrated well, known in former days by the name of "The Poor's Physician," who daily flocked thither as a certain relief to every disorder; and so firm was their faith in its virtues, that few were not ideally or really benefited from it. Over the top was the figure of an angel in gilt bronze, whose light wings were extended, as if hovering the celestial guard of this sacred spring.

As they repassed through the Cathedral, they noticed the wooden work over the stalls to be of exquisite carved workmanship; and above, round the walls, they traced, what the guide informed them was called "The Friar's Walk;" Emily wished to ascend to it, but as none of the party would accompany her, she was obliged to give up her wished-for promenade.

Having

reached it, they could not expect to enter the magic domain until the nightly inhabitants, said to perambulate there, had quitted their silent repositories to visit the sublunary world their grosser bodies had long bid adieu to.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

"Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn,
Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn;
Amidst thy bowers the Tyrant's hand is seen,
And desolation saddens all the green.

And now the sounds of population fail,
No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,
No busy steps the grass-grown foot-way tread,
But all the bloomy flush of life is fled."

GOLDSMITH'S *Deserted Village.*

THE night was drawing on apace, as the carriage entered the sad remnant of a deserted village. A few scattered cottages afforded

afforded shelter yet to one or two poor families, who earned the scanty meal, by cultivating a few vegetables in a little garden, working in the fields of the distant gentry, and picking up the trifling gleanings. But, ah! how changed the scene, which, some years back, had displayed the neat rows of well-thatched cottages; the barns filled with the grain of each ground's rich produce; the curling smoke issuing from the chimnies, as the careful wife prepared the wholesome, comfortable meal, for the honest husbandman; the rosy-faced damsels singing the merry song, as they tripped lightly over the bending grass, with their milk-pail, or cautiously stole forth to meet the rustic lover; and the happy children assembled on the green, sported their innocent gambols, unconscious of future change—but now all was desolation, and two or three half-naked boys and girls, coming forth to gaze with astonishment at the cavalcade, shouting, in concert to a few snarling curs, and fol-

lowed by the childrens' equally miserable-looking parents, was all left to point out this spot, as having formerly been the beloved village of old Lord Fitzwalter's happy vassals, where peace, plenty, and comfort, were united to virtue, industry, and social intercourse.

Anna fixed her mild blue eyes on the moon, which

> " Rising, in clouded majesty, at length,
> " Apparent queen, unveil'd her peerless light,
> " And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw ;"

and lifted up her gentle soul in admiration and praise of the Divine Author of the creation's great and glorious works.

They now entered the deep bosom of the wood, where darkness visible prevailed; for the majestic luminary of night, whose clear beams reflected the surrounding objects in fullest lustre, was no where here to be seen; and the awful gloom which enwrapped

wrapped the forest, received still more solemn shade, when contrasted to the brighter prospects they had so recently admired.

The carriage moved slowly forward, alternately rolling over the soft verdure with scarcely perceptible motion, at other times rudely jolting, as it came in contact with the fallen members of the forest's venerable inhabitants.

"Are you prepared, O most comparable knight of the scientific shield!" cried Emily, with affected gravity, "to meet the redoubtable assailants of these portentous territories?"

De Courcy, to whom she addressed herself, was too deeply wrapped in the mental contemplation of the beautiful assailant who sat opposite to him, (for it was too obscure to distinguish her features) to hear the question of Miss Grenville.

"Hal

"Hal is in the clouds, I think," said his Lordship.

"Don't disturb him, said she, in a half whisper; "he is studying an address in the *dead* languages, to conciliate the favour of our ghostly enemies."

A laugh at the philosophic champion, recalled him from his reverie, in which he joined, on learning the cause of it, and good-humouredly replied, that a rallying point from her might better parry the attack, than the generalship of a Hannibal, or the elocution of a Cicero, *attempted* by him.

The carriage now rolled along the heavy pavement of an immense square court, and they beheld lights moving across the lower casements of the Castle; and a massive iron gate, whose hinges turned with a grating sound, brought them beneath a deep portcullis. The lofty arches above resounded, in one low murmurs, to the horses feet and the rattling

wheels, neither of which had been heard to re-echo, within these reverberating walls, for many years before.

An old grey-headed man appeared, followed by a woman, whom Emily styled the Otwayian hag, and, with lights, afforded an imperfect view of the places through which they passed.

The venerable pair welcomed the party with repeated bows and curtsies, exclaiming together—it was many a long day since Eure Castle was honoured with such company; while the servants, more than half terrified with the appearance of the place, and the withered looks of its two guardians, wished, from their hearts, it had still remained free of such noble guests, or that it had not been their lot to have entered it.

Anna shrunk timidly from its awful gloom; her mind had caught the solemn infection

infection the time and the place expressed; and seizing the arm of her sprightly and undaunted friend, silently followed their conductors.

They entered a hall of considerable magnitude, whose black and encrusted sides admitted, through its opening chinks, the creeping ivy, as secure repositories for the sparrow and stone-chatter. Its lofty arches were supported by cumbrous pillars, some of whom, falling to decay, threatened destruction to the unwary passenger; they were reflected by a tripod lamp, depending from the centre; and as their venerable guides turned into one of the many dreary passages, which presented themselves, leading from this antique vestibule, the melancholy shade its blue flame threw over it, when the greater lights disappeared, gave to its appearance, a perfect representation of this place being the midnight meeting of grizzly ghosts and wandering spirits.

From this passage the party ascended a flight of heavy stone steps, loose, and, in many places, rather dangerous, which were likewise supported by drooping pillars. At the bottom of them Emily noticed the grim visage of a mutilated warrior, who, deprived of his legs, appeared, in a recumbent attitude, to depend on the falling pillars for their weak assistance; his hand still grasped the remnant of a ponderous weapon, but of what nature, it exhibited no traces, and he seemed as if stationed there, the formidable guard of this ancient structure.

Margarette, for this was the old dame who saluted the parties arrival, observing Emily's attention to the martial hero of old, said—

"That was the *stature* of the great Sir Marmaduke Fitzwalter, Lady, the first of the name. He lost his legs in the holy wars, fighting with King Richard

Richard the First, against the *Turkish Sarjents.*"

"And what a happy design of the sculptor," replied Emily, with a very serious look, "to give to the *great* Sir Marmaduke's *stature* its appropriate dimension!"

"There's his legs beside him," continued Margarette, not rightly understanding her; "they broke off many years agone."

"I thought he might have left them *behind* him," replied Miss Grenville, "with the *Turkish Sarjents,* to prove to the infidels he was too good a soldier to run away."

They advanced up the steps, and crossed a long oaken gallery, whose sides, though highly polished, looked as if they mourned the desolation round them: It led to an apartment correspondent to the rest of the building; but it was lighted up, and seemed less gloomy than they expected.

"We have been looking out for your honours these some days past," said the venerable steward of the Castle, as he placed the lights on the large dark table. "I had my dear respected Lady's letter, to announce your coming, and I have endeavoured to set every thing in the best order. But, my noble Lords and Ladies, this Castle does not now afford a stately reception. Ah! I remember when its doors were thrown open, to receive each welcome guest."—The old man passed the back of his hand across his eyes. "Forgive me, your honours, I can't think of it without tears; alas! alas! it is sadly altered indeed!"

"I believe you are a worthy old soul," cried Emily, looking at him with kindness. "I have heard Lady Fitzwalter speak highly in your favour."

"Oh! my dear, dear, good mistress!" sobbed out the poor man; "I love the ground she goes on.—I was a happy creature, when last I saw her Ladyship. And why

why not?—She made every body happy round her—rich or poor, it was all the same to her. She was such another as our good old Lord; but I'll never see her like again—no, never; yet I think I could not rest in my grave, if I did not see my worthy respected mistress before I went to it."

"I am told it's peculiar to the former inhabitants of this Castle," said Emily, "to be *restless* there, let the reason be what it will."

"Aye, lady," replied Robert, "people must talk, and say strange things too, but —— Shall I order your honours' supper?" added he, as if willing to wave that subject.

"Humph!" thought Emily; "there seems a tacit avowal of his own belief in it, but I must have better proofs still to establish my own."

A very excellent, though not a very splendid repast, shortly after appeared on the board, to which the party sat down,

with contented hearts and good appetites. Old Robert would take his place at the side-board, which afforded some choice wines, that yet belonged to the Castle cellars; and however they wished to dispense with the attendance of this respectable veteran; he would have the pleasure, he said, of once again witnessing something like its former festivity; it cheered his old heart to see them, and brought back to his mind the good times gone by.

The hilarity of the happy party, the lights, the supper, the servants round them, and the charming spirits of Emily Grenville, dispersed, from each, the gloomy reflections at first imbibed;—Anna forgot her fears, and, as if inspired by her animated friend, caught some of her lively manners, and never appeared more happy, or more sweetly captivating.

De Courcy gazed on her with rapture; her lovely face was dimpled with smiles; it

was

was tempered with the graces of modesty, so peculiar to it; his heart worshipped her; and had it not been her's before, this night would have made it all her own.

It was not till rather a late hour for weary travellers, that our party retired to rest from the fatigues of their long journey: Robert attended to shew the gentlemen their chambers, and dame Margarette appeared to wait on the ladies. Anna's courage seemed again to relax, nor did their conductress look as if she could spare her any of her's. She led the way, rather through fear than respect, and frequently turned her head round, not to observe the company after her, but to watch whether there was any *additional* person. Emily perceived, from the tenor of her looks, what the old woman was apprehensive of, and but for dread of alarming Anna, would have been malicious enough to have played on her fears, by adding a little to her terrors; the hour, and the place, were, indeed,

calculated to appal a stouter heart than dame Margarette possessed, which was weak almost to imbecility.

They returned by the same way which they had before passed, and entered a long passage, terminating in a narrow flight of black marble steps. These they ascended, and brought them into a kind of gallery, at the further end of which appeared a large folding door of dark polished wood; and Emily asking where it led to, her conductress slightly answered, it opened into a suit of rooms, which had not been looked into for many years. Margarette visibly redoubled her speed, seemingly anxious to get from it, and proceeded up a second range of heavy stone stairs, at top of which Emily was obliged to lend her assistance, in pushing open a door of similar colour to that just before remarked, which turned discordant on its creeking hinges; and on being let go, shut to with a noise that resounded like thunder through the

the high vaulted corridore they now entered.

Emily's courage, though it did not falter, felt a little awed at the solemn stillness of the place, for only their own footsteps were heard, returning on the ear, in sullen echoes from the extensive arch; and its remote distance from where she supposed their knights were lodged, gave to her mind a little uneasiness, not from its receiving any supernatural impression, so likely to be here imbibed by a weaker one, but she had heard of old castles being often made the secret repositories of contraband goods, and lawless banditti, who fabricated reports, capable of prejudicing credulous persons, as the surer means of pursuing their designs unmolested; and this spot, she thought, calculated for the receptacle of such unprincipled depredators. She was, however, relieved of her worst apprehensions by Margarette, who, as if reading what passed in her mind, though, in fact,

her sagacity was often insufficient to develop her own, pointed to an interior passage, as containing the chambers where the gentlemen reposed.

The corridore displayed the ruins of the sculptor's chisel, both in its own drooping ornaments, and sallow statues of fabulous history. At one end lay the dingy fragments of a Hercules, who, having lost his supporting club, had fallen, crushed almost to atoms, by his own weight. Near him was a recumbent Atlas, who appeared as if weeping over the shattered world his shoulders were no longer able to bear. At a little distance lay a decayed Venus, who, deserted by the Loves and Graces, and pilfered of her beauties by the hand of Time, exhibited a melancholy example of fragile externals. By her side was stretched the imperious Juno, robbed of her gaudy favourite, aud humbled almost to the dust. Close to her the sage goddess was just discernable, who seemed fast deserting the terrestrial

terrestrial world, and beneath whose shield a living emblem of her wisdom had taken refuge, but, unable to meet the sudden glare, quickly withdrew its head, as if dreading a scrutiny, which might divest him of his transient covering, and expose, to the light, his natural stupidity. Higher up, Jove's thunder-bolt had fallen harmless at his feet, and the angry god, endeavouring to regain it, had lost his equilibrium, was precipitated from his towering height, and, dragging his foot-stool with him, was buried beneath the ruins of his former magnificence. The attendants of Bacchus lay in scattered heaps on the ground, and the rosy votary himself, tumbled off his barrel, gave a just representation of intemperance, by appearing crushed to pieces under his favourite vessel.

Above, the arms of Fitzwalter, deprived of their lustre, and nearly bereft of their supporters, reclined in melancholy attitude, seeming to mourn the downfall of

their ancient house; while the black wall, frowning from beneath them, hung out the insignia of woe, and gave a dismal *relief* to their fading grandeur.

The high arched casements of stone, in many parts broken and dismantled, had scarcely the appearance of ever having been indebted to the glazier; and a few thin boards, slightly nailed up, admitted, at once, both light and air. It was certain, that, in those days, the light which the Great Disposer of the world gave, as an universal blessing, to his creatures, was not diminished or excluded from the poor and unhappy beings, whose slender pittances, for the support of a family, were earned by hard industry, pursued with cheerfulness, under the influence of Heaven's most invigorating gifts: They were not then compelled to shut out the favour so freely bestowed by their Great Master, through the inability of complying with the heavy demands of an earthly restricter, which, however

ever trifling to those whose affluent circumstances leave them in full enjoymen of its benefits, must be, to the indigent wretched, an accumulation of their grievances.

A long railing of ebony extended the length of this vast corridore, over which, as Emily and Anna leaned, they beheld beneath, the dreary and dismal hall, through which they had, at first, entered, now appearing more gloomy and melancholy, as its solitary light faintly glimmered a pale expiring flame through the dusky reflector.

At the further end of the corridore they encountered a third ascent of steep and irregular steps, which conveyed them across a kind of lobby, where Margarette, throwing open a large folding door of ancient workmanship, informed the ladies that this was their apartment.

Anna threw her eyes round it in rather fearful

fearful emotion, which the appearance was well calculated to inspire. It was a square, of immense magnitude, hung round with the remnants of defaced tapestry, which might have once been superb; but, at present, the great Ulysses, whose story it had finely represented, instead of wearing the form of a Grecian general, looked like a bugbear to frighten children. His wife, Penelope, at her distaff, had a resemblance to Hecate, in the dismal cavern of her incantations: and in another part of it, where their son, Telemachus, seeking his father, is driven on Calypso's island, the fair enchantress, with her nymphs, surrounding the elegant youth, and his sage conductor, formed a group, that would have rivalled the Pandemonium of a Milton.

The bed bore literally the semblance to a place of rest, descending from the ceiling to the floor; and the original dark green of the velvet hangings, having assumed a duskier hue, the tarnished heavy gold fringe,

fringe, depending in loose fragments, and the quilt of the same materials as the curtains, at top of which a white sheet was visible, pourtrayed it to the imagination as an awful memento of death's last state rites. The chairs were correspondent, as were also the window-hangings; and a large mirror, placed just before the bed's foot, which reflected the distant objects in deeper shade, returned them on the eye in shapeless and terrific visions. Anna sat down, she sighed, and a half rising wish conveyed her back to her friends at Deventon.

"Good lack!" cried Margarette, who was gifted with as much loquacity as ever fell to one woman's share, and which she had, with no small difficulty, restrained, from the dread of hearing her own voice resound through the lofty walls, as they ascended—"Good lack! young lady, you don't seem well; frighted mayhap; aye, I warrant you are, and so have I, many a time and

and often. My heart beats thump, thump, so now! I have not been this far up the Castle, these many years agone, till my Lady's letter cum'd, to bid us prepare it for the gentlefolks. Bless me, how my poor old bones did ache, running up and down, to and fro!"

"I don't think you ran very fast," said Emily, with a smile, to her.

"No, no, young lady," replied Margarette, "them there days are all gone over with me. I remember once I run for a wager down the front walk of the wood with Giles Cracklash, my Lord's whipper-in, but i'fecks I whipped him out; and how my Lord and Lady did laugh! Well, we can't have our cake and eat it. So, as I was a telling you," continued the old woman, "when my Lady's letter cum'd, and Robert took out his spectacles to read it, dear, dear, he could scarce believe his eyes, and I star'd so—well, to be sure, we went about to set the Castle a bit to rights; then there was such scrubbing and sweeping,

ing, and such dragging about of furniture; but we were obliged to get our young lad, my grandson, to help us. Then there was no part of the place fit to put a cat in, but the west tower, where we are now; and it is such a way from where Robert and I live below, that my knees would so twitter—but I never came up after it was dark—no, I would not come up, by myself, after the sun got down, not if the whole Castle was *lumified* from top to bottom, as it used to be afore now."

Anna smiled, and again forgot her fears, at the old woman's discourse, when Emily, whispering her not to be any way alarmed at the fancies of age and weak intellects, asked of Margarette, why she, who had so long lived in the Castle, found any reluctance in passing through it at all hours?

"Bless me, Miss," she replied, "you know the reason, don't you?"

"If I did," said Emily, who only dissembled

sembled to hear *her* explanation of it, "if I did, there would be no occasion for my enquiry."

Margarette looked round apprehensively —"It is not proper to say any thing about it now, Miss," said she, softly.

"Now!" cried Emily, "and why not *now* as well as any other time—you're not afraid of any particular thing, I suppose, Margarette?"

"*Afeard*, Miss!" and she moved closer to her. "Pray don't talk about it."

"About what?" cried Emily, laughingly. "I don't recollect having spoken of any direct person or object.—I want you merely to answer my first question."

"Not for all the whole world, Miss," replied she, tremblingly. "I'm sure I would never get down stairs alive, if I said a word about them, at this hour of the night—there—don't you hear—Lord bless us and save us, this is just the hour!"

A distant clock struck the awful twelve.

"Twelve

"Twelve o'clock, Miss," she added; "I wish I was below.—Pray don't say another word about them; they're all in the great apartments, down stairs. O Lord, have mercy upon us!—My teeth are chattering together."—(It happened she had not any to chatter together.)—"I wish I was down stairs, safe and sound, with poor Robert."

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed out Emily. "It is poor Margarette, as well as poor Robert.—Well, then, since you'll not tell us all about the ghosts ——"

Margarette started up and caught fast hold of her—she looked like one herself. "For God's sake—O Lord, how could you?—O, they'll kill us—I wish I was below stairs—Look at the lights, how they burn—The door is not fast—They'll be in at the key-hole, or down the *chimbly*—Lord, have mercy on us!"—and she hid her face with her apron.

"Well, then," said Emily, seeing the old creature was really frightened, "tell us something else of this famous Castle; do,

do, Margarette, something that wont terrify you; I suppose it affords a deal of anecdotes, and I came a great journey to look for intelligence.—How long have you resided in it?"

"A long while, indeed," replied she, by degrees recovering from her terrors; "a long, long while, indeed. I came here before my Lady was married—aye, or before my Lord had any notion of *been* married. She was a sweet creature, tall and genteel; and I remember, too, there came to her wedding, Lord de Courcy, the grandfather of my Lord below stairs, I suppose, as fine and as proper a man as you need to look on, and so funny too. His Lordship used to be very often at the Castle, and would sometimes say to me, 'Ah, Margy, why don't you get married; you're a fine young woman;' and so I was, ladies." She glanced her eyes at the large glass, which reflected her poor emaciated figure, and seemed, in the contemplation of her *present*, or the recollection of her past charms,

charms, to have lost all idea of the ghosts. —"And then," continued she, after having surveyed herself some time, "he would chuck me under the chin, or tap me on the cheek, and I used to laugh so at his great big white wig, all so nicely curled, and his large sleeves, so bedaubed with gold lace: Then he'd laugh too. Ah!" added she, with a sigh, "*them* were the good days, but they're gone, aye, gone for ever."

Something seemed to twitch Margarette's feelings, and she wiped her eyes with the corner of her nice white apron.

Poor old creature! thought Anna, it must be painful to thy heart to think that there remains but thee and thy aged companion, to relate the past splendour of Eure Castle. Yet even, in the retrospect of early joys, there must be a melancholy pleasure in dwelling on former scenes, and former friends.

Margarette

Margarette again resumed her discourse.

"When my Lady was married, what fine doings there *was* to be sure! nothing but dancing and feasting, from morning till night. Then she was so fond of *me*, because I belonged to the place, and gave me such sights of grand clothes! and I used to be so nicely dressed, the servants, one and all on 'em, so envied me; and, to tell the truth, I was always reckoned a good-looking girl. Then my Lady brought a Scotch footman with her—she was very fond on him, as he was her countryman, for she came somewhere from the *Hebrews* herself, and he used to call me the bonnie lassie o' Castle Eure. Indeed, to be sure, I did not much like the name at first, for I thought myself too plump and fattish to be called *bony;* but I found out it was *pretty* he meant by the word, so I was very well satisfied. Then how jealous Mrs. Perkins was!—that was my Lady's own woman, a great

great tall scraggy—she was *bony* indeed! with her great grey eyes, and cheek bones sticking out, she looked like"——Margarette suddenly recollected that the person she was going to ridicule had been dead many years, and made a full stop, slowly moving her head round the room, as if she dreaded to meet the ghostly visage of Mrs. Perkins in every corner.—" But she was a very good woman, ladies," continued she, after some pause—" a very good woman indeed; and if she was not *quite* so handsome as *other* folks, it was not her fault you know—she could not help that.—Let me think—aye, its just five-and-fifty years agone since I first came to live here."

" A long period, indeed," said Emily, who, as well as Anna, was highly delighted at the old woman's propensity for talk, and wished to indulge it.—" And, I suppose, as you was so pretty a girl," she added, " you had many suitors in the Castle?"

" Yes, and out of it too, Miss," replied Margarette, with an important nod at the

recollection of her numerous conquests—"plenty and plenty. Then when I got married, (and I got a husband long before Mrs. Perkins did) what great ado my Lady made at my wedding! And, I remember, old Lord de Courcy was here then, and he gave me five golden guineas. I was as happy, to be sure, as the day was long, till my Lady"——her courage appeared to relax again, as she was going to mention Lady Fitzwalter's decease.—"But I'll tell you more to-morrow, young ladies."

"Nay, now," said Emily. "Come, Margarette, don't be alarmed without any cause. I'll say the *word* for you, and then you may continue the remainder.—Your Lady died."

"Yes, Miss," went on the old woman, "and it was a sad day to us all. It seemed as if there was a *detestation* over her."

"A what?" Emily hastily asked.

"Why, Miss," continued Margarette, "mayhap you don't rightly *imprehend* what say. Her Ladyship would go to the *Hebrews* to

to visit her people, for she said she was sure if she did not, that she would never see them again. Her Ladyship was then near lying in of her first child, though she had been married a matter of ten years. So my Lord begg'd and begg'd of her not, but she was positive, and he consented at last. Sure enough my poor Lady caught a cold there, and came home very ill. My Lord was sadly grieved—but what could he do? The doctors said she had got an *information* on her lungs, and she lived but three weeks after our present Lord was born."

Just as Margarette concluded these words, Anna, who had been undressing during her story, stept gently into bed, and the cords creeked as she entered it.

"Lord, have mercy upon me! Amen, amen, amen," cried the terrified Margarette, seizing fast hold of Emily.—"I told you how it would be—I wish I was below

stairs—O, why did I speak of her at all?—She's in the bed—God forgive me my sins and *inquisitions*—It was there she died too—Lord have mercy on me!"

Again Emily laughed aloud, as did also Anna.

"Don't laugh, don't laugh, young ladies," added she, still clinging to Miss Grenville; —"its no laughing matter—There—there now, don't you hear her?—I wish I was down stairs—I shall never pass the corridor alive at this time o' night—and the suit of rooms too, where they all are.—Lord, have mercy on me, what will I do?"

"Why, if they're *all* in the rooms below," said Emily, "you know, Margarette, there can't be any of them here at present; and if you really are afraid to go down by yourself, I'll see you past the tremendous corridor."

"And who is to come back with you, Miss?" asked Margarette, looking with an expression

expression of enquiry and astonishment on her countenance.

"I shall not require a conductor," replied Miss Grenville, "for as I am a stranger, and the ghosts of this place being mostly persons of *distinction*, I presume they have not forgot the courtesy of their times, any more than the *world* they learned it in, but will allow me, as a visitor, to pass unmolested."

Margarette did not fully comprehend the sense of Emily's words, though she judged by them that she must be either a fool, or no Christian, who could, so boldly, hazard an encounter—alone too, with the wandering beings of the other world, who, she was convinced, trod it with no good intention toward its more substantial inhabitants; and the aerial visitants of the Castle, she believed to be most malignantly disposed to every person within its walls, or its extent.

"Well, well," cried she, shaking her head, "see how it will be; I think you'll have cause to change your mind, Miss, on the score of their civility. I am sure they have been very uncivil to me, often and often, frightening me out of my senses every night."

"I wonder you have any left," said Emily, smiling. "Now I am rather of opinion that they were so firm to their own creed, it was not easy to shake them, and the *strength* of their imagination raised up *supporters*, whose existence have been beyond a doubt."

Margarette understood less of this speech than the former one, and only answered to it by repeating her wish that she was safe down stairs, adding—"I'll carry one of the lights, Miss, and do you take the other."

"Nay," replied Emily, "that would be unkind of us, to leave my friend in the dark; but come, Margarette, do you hold by my arm, while I carry the light; and should

should any ghostly opponent presume to interrupt our progress, I'll brandish my flaming weapon with more substantial spirit than it will attack us."

Margarette did as she was desired—clung fast by Emily's arm. They passed the appalling corridor without interruption, where the old woman, depending on her guide's direction, kept her eyes close shut, for fear of beholding any lurking enemy. They reached the great hall, when her fears being somewhat abated, Emily wished her a good night, requesting, as she would have nothing to apprehend in the day, that Margarette would call her betimes in the morning; then tripping back more expeditiously than she had descended with her feeble charge, though with as little fear, returned to the chamber, where, while she was preparing for bed, to divert Anna from any fears her own timidity, or Margarette's words, might have called up, she rated the old creature's terrors in so ludicrous a form, that her fair companion's

were chased away by this mirthful, laughter-loving nymph, who, however, took the precaution to examine round the extensive chamber, that no living being was there secreted to invade their repose. The arras was, in one or more places, nailed down to the wall, and Emily thought she felt something like a door beneath it. She was alarmed a little at first, though she did not express it to Anna; but a few moments recollection made her judge the impossibility of any persons entrance from that way, by the place being secured, and the door, if it was one, immovably fast to the pressure of her hand. It might be a wainscot too, she thought, for she perceived, beneath the open part of the tapestry, the remains of some curious wooden work. She placed the lights in the wide-yawning grateless hearth, and retiring to bed, on the sweet pillow of innocence, Emily, and her lovely friend, enjoyed a repose uninterrupted by any actual or imaginary disturber.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

"Old age is talkative, and we may learn
Somewhat of moment from him."

WHITEHEAD.

AS our party came to Eure Castle for the purpose of inspecting it throughout, they were not to be deterred from examining into every part of it, by the ridiculous reports and idle fancies of dame Margery, or any other person. She, indeed, expressed a new apprehension of *disturbing* the dreaded company, supposed to inhabit the

forsaken chambers, not, in fact, from any present apprehensions of entering them, with so many protectors, but from the dread of the grizzly visitants wreaking on her their vengeance, when she could have no assistance to apply to. On that head, however, she was quieted by Emily, who, very seriously, told her, that as she was not the mistress of those apartments, and, therefore, had no authority to resist the commands given her, she could not be punished for a misdemeanour committed against her desire.

Margarette very loudly protested it was really against her will these chambers should be opened, or entered; but as it was her place to submit to their orders, she hoped no future evil would attend her, by being obliged to comply with them.

She delivered these words as if she expected to be overheard by the disembodied beings of her apprehensive imagination;

tion; and the party collected together for the purpose of indulging their curiosity, in a review of these deserted rooms, which they understood to have been the state apartments of this noble mansion. The servants, whom they equally wished to indulge in this inspection, were also summoned to attend, and, with the venerable steward, followed by Mrs. Margarette, the party proceeded to their examination, closed in the rear by the no less anxious domestics, whose curiosity was as fully on the stretch as their masters and mistresses.

They ascended the stairs, and, crossing the corridor, arrived at the door, which Emily had, once before, asked some questions concerning. Robert produced a large bunch of curious-formed keys, one of which, with difficulty, he fixed in the lock; but the old man was obliged to apply to a stouter arm than his own to turn it, and which one of the servants did, though not without some trouble. The great folding

door slowly moved on its rusty joints; but the heavy musty effluvia which came from the inside, and the partial light emitted through the broken shutters, compelled the party to linger awhile behind, till the servants assisted to open the windows, for the free admission of air and light.

"This, your Honours," said the hoary-headed guide, as they entered, "was the anti-chamber: there is nothing in it worth your observation, as it was only for the servants in waiting to announce the company forward."

They again passed on through a second stately entrance, into an apartment, whose splendour might have once raised their admiration, as it now did their pity for its neglected state.

"This," continued Robert, "was the grand reception chamber.—Here have I, many and many a time, beheld the noble company assembled,

assembled, with my dear Lord and Lady smiling a welcome on every visitor."

The manner in which the good old man delivered this simple speech, was an eulogium of the persons named fully expressive of their hospitable character.

The remains of a velvet carpet, whose exquisite raised flowers had often involuntarily repelled the hasty step, for fear of crushing the beauties nature seemed to have strewed it with, exhibited, at present, their faded charms, traced by the devouring moth and gnawing worm. The crimson draperies of the like texture, fringed with gold, and fastened at top with cords and tassels of the same, falling over an azure blue, of heavenly tint, might once have imposed on the sight, as the vivid rays of a retiring sun from the pure expanse of a summer's sky; but now it appeared as chased by the rude blasts of winter;—thunder-storms and clouds had arisen to disperse

perse the refulgent prospect, and obscuring the bright hemisphere, left but to the imagination to fancy what it had been. The sofas, chairs, and marble tables, lay in broken ruins; and the concave above, where *Phæton* had whipped his fiery coursers, was deserted by the luminous god, and the dust from his chariot wheels seemed, alone, to have preserved its station, curling in deepening shades, as if to mourn his absence.

From this chamber they entered the banquetting-room, equal, in splendid decay, to that they had just left, and where the overturned seats, and spread tables, gave manifest tokens of its lost visitors having been more convivially disposed than its present.

"Ah!" cried Robert, shaking his white locks, "I recollect well this room having resounded to the joyous mirth of a chosen company of friends, a day or two before my

my respected Lady quitted the Castle—never, I fear, to enter it again. See, every thing lies about in the disorder they left it. How often have I attended here, to help the sparkling goblet to the noble Knight, while the generous master pledged his friends; and to the cordial reception his lips gave, his honest heart assented."

Robert applied the end of his long white neckcloth to his eyes; his tears were sincere, for they fell to the memory of the best of friends—old Lord Fitzwalter.

They next proceeded to the music-room.—Alas! its instruments no longer vibrated to the skilful musician's finger; the bold trumpet sounded not to the warrior's blast; and the mellow horn ceased to reply to the huntsman's blithe tantivy. The violin of Cramer was mute to the notes of Handel, and the faltering harp had been insensible to the touch of David.

From

From this place the party entered what was, in former days, called the ladies' withdrawing-room, which opened into a superb gallery, that communicated with another chamber, uniform to the above. The first of those chambers was pannelled, with rosewood and mirrors alternately placed from top to bottom round it; and the pannels adorned with views of the most celebrated ancient and modern structures in England, together with a few of some remarkable edifices abroad. From the centre of the mirrors descended a drapery of deep orange satin, falling on each side in folds to the floor, and on whose dark shade the broad silver trimming was elegantly relieved. The shattered fragments of a cut lustre was reflected from the middle of each; and on the ceiling above, where Apollo had struck the lyre to his nine scientific sisters, a faint shadow of the groupe was alone discernible, as they disappeared behind the dingy cloud that obscured their favourite Parnassus.

Robert

Robert produced a scroll, which described the different pictures throughout this room, the gallery, and the opposite apartment, but so defaced, it was not possible to trace the whole.

"This," said the old man, pointing to the first, "represents the ruins of Battle Abbey, founded by William the Conqueror, in memory of the battle of Hastings, where he slew King Harold, and ended the Saxon government.

"Here," continued he, coming to another, "are the remains of St. Edmundbury Abbey, in Suffolk. It takes its name from Edmund, King of the East Saxons, who was wounded by the Danes, and buried there.

"This," added he, "is Kenilworth Castle, in Warwickshire, built by Geoffry De Clinton, chamberlain to Henry the First. It was here the great Earl of Leicester entertained his royal mistress, Queen Elizabeth,

beth, with the magnificence which was due to such a sovereign.

"Here, your Honours," continued Robert, coming to another, "you see the romantic ruins of Castle Campbell, at the foot of the Ochil-hills, in Fife. It belonged to the Argyle family, but was demolished by the Marquis of Montrose, in the year 1645. And in the same shire is the Castle of Loch-Levin, where Mary, Queen of Scots, was imprisoned by her nobles, and from which she escaped, through the assistance of George Douglas, the Governor's son. Likewise in this other frame is Stirling Castle, built on the top of a very high rock, and which was impregnable to the Pretender's attack in 1745. It was the residence of many Scottish Kings; and in it a haughty Earl of Douglas met his death by the hand of James the Second, on refusing to break the dangerous association he had formed against government.

"On that stupendous rock," proceeded Robert, pointing to another, "is Edinburgh

burgh Castle, where the favourite Secretary of the no less unfortunate Mary, Rizzio, met his death in 1566, by the hand of her husband, Henry Stuart, Earl of Darnley; for which cruel deed, it is conjectured, he received an untimely end himself, in less than a year after, the house, where he lay ill of a fever, being blown up by gunpowder; but whether the Queen was privy to it or not, is doubtful. The perpetrators were the Earl of Bothwell, and a few of his followers.

"In this next one you perceive the remaining Tower of Cawdor, in the county of Banff, once the seat of the powerful Thanes. It has been celebrated as a place of great superstition, from the idea of its being the resort of all the witches and hobgoblins of the country."

"Lord, have mercy on us!" cried Margarette, with a look as if she believed them surrounding her—"How can you talk so, Robert; an't you *afeard* to say anything about such *people* in this place?"

The

The party smiled, and Robert whispering her not to expose her ridiculous folly, in presence of the gentlefolks, resumed his narration, in which he was more assisted by memory than the parchment he held.

"Here, my Lord and Ladies," he, went on, "you see Berkley Castle, in Gloucestershire, where it was reported that Edward the Second was barbarously put to death by Lord Maltravers; but that story has been contradicted by some very good writers. He was, however, confined here, and died in it.

"This," added he, pointing to a stately structure, "is the celebrated Cathedral of Durham, or Dunholme, formed for holding the body of Holy St. Cuthbert. The Monks of Lindsfern, or Holy Island, being driven thence by the Danish pirates, carried with them the remains of the saint; but not finding a place of rest for it, they fasted and prayed three days; at the end of that

that time, either in a dream, or by a warning voice from Heaven, they were desired to bring the body to Dunholme; but not knowing where it was, they wandered for some years in search of it, till, at last, they discovered the place, by hearing an old woman ask after her cow, which had strayed, and she was told it was in Dunholme; to which place the Monks brought the body, and erected over it a temporary building, where the people daily flocked from all parts, to visit the saint's relics, and witness the miracles performed by them, when they presented such offerings as soon enabled the Monks to give their saint a more suitable habitation; and in the course of time this Cathedral was founded, in which the body was sumptuously enshrined; and one of the windows gives his history, finely executed in painted glass.

"Next it," continued Robert, "is the Cathedral of Canterbury, first erected by Archbishop Anselm, in the reign of Henry the

the First, but accidentally destroyed by fire, in consequence of its being built of wood, which was mostly used in those days. It was afterwards commenced on the plan it here appears, but was not compleated till the time of Henry the Fifth. Your Honours perceive it is a gothic structure, and formed, like most cathedrals, in shape of a cross. It is remarkable for the murder of Thomas a Becket, in 1170, whose church power was so great, that he had become dangerous both to King and State. He was cruelly murdered, on the steps leading to the choir, going to perform his religious duties, by four gentlemen of Henry the Second's suite, in whose presence that monarch had inadvertently said—'would no person deliver him from that wicked prelate?'—The King was very seriously grieved at it," continued the speaker, "though not for his death, but the manner in which it happened."

Robert was obliged to pass over many

of the pictures, from the defects in the account of them; he proceeded on to those which were more legibly preserved on the scroll he at times had recourse to for refreshing his memory.

"This," he next continued, "is Hampton-court, the favourite residence of our Kings. It was first built by the great Cardinal Wolsey, who gave it to Henry for Richmond. There you see the alterations and improvements made by the Royal William and Queen Mary; it is over the River Thames, and is a noble edifice. One of those walks, yonder, was executed by Mr. Cibber, the father of our poet of that name.

"Next to it, your Honours," he went on, "is the Palace of Windsor, in Berkshire. It is of Saxon origin, but has undergone various changes and alterations by the successive Princes. It was much neglected during the wars between the houses of York and Lancaster, but was repaired by Charles

Charles the Second, and has ever since been a particular royal residence.

"In this frame," added he, "you behold the noble seat of Blenheim, in Oxfordshire, so called in memory of the victory obtained by the allied armies over the French and Bavarians in 1704, and given to the great Duke of Marlborough, for his many services in Flanders and Germany; it was built under the direction of Sir John Vanburgh. Yonder you see the noble bridge, erected after the famous Rialto in Venice; it is 190 feet diameter. Those ruins, in perspective, in the park, are supposed to be the remains of Rosámond's Palace.

"And next to it," he continued, "your Honours have a view of the most magnificent residence in Europe—Stowe, in Buckinghamshire. It belonged to the Grenville family, but, at present, to the worthy Earl Temple. It would not be possible to describe its beauties in so small a compass, they are so many, and each superior

to

to the other. They have been celebrated by different poets, and various accounts have been written of them.

"Here," proceeded Robert, "is Westminster Abbey, famed all over Europe as the noblest gothic structure in England. It is founded on a spot formerly called Thorney Island, and was first a church and convent belonging to the converted Saxons, but was destroyed, by Danish fury, in the year 850. King Edgar rebuilt it of wood, which Edward, the Confessor, again had taken down, and a more stately one set up. Henry the Third ordered this one to be demolished, and in its place erected the present magnificent structure. In 1274 it was much damaged by fire, and the repairs by Edward the First added considerably to its beauty. There is a story related of it, please your Honours," added the old man, "which is a little curious, and shews the cunning of the Monks of those days.—When the Abbey was finished, by Edward the Confessor, the Bishop of London was

to have consecrated it; but the Monks, at continual war with the secular Clergy, did not like the idea of being under episcopal authority, framed a plan which passed current, and for its ingenuity deserves to be recorded. They assembled together in prayers, beseeching of God to shew them some miracle of his Divine Will; when, on a sudden, the whole place became illuminated, and a voice was heard from above, saying—'That as they had chosen St. Peter for their patron, he was come down from Heaven to consecrate the church;'—upon which the Apostle made his appearance, carrying, in his hand, the keys, before whom they bowed in reverence and astonishment; then rising up, followed their blessed leader, who having performed the solemn office which brought him again on earth, re-ascended to Heaven. The lights having alarmed several persons, they had flocked to the church, and had witnessed the ceremony, which was so well contrived, that the deception was universally credited

as

as a reality, and being attested by the Monks to the King, it was thought a profanation to allow of an earthly consecration, after an heavenly one; and Westminster Abbey has, ever since, been considered by the weak and superstitious, as under the peculiar protection and blessing of St. Peter."

There was a smile of *incredulity* on every face present, except old Margarette's; but she being one of superstition's most faithful children, gave implicit credit to it; wishing, from her heart, that holy St. Peter would *execrate* Eure Castle, to drive away from it all evil spirits, and *superannuated* beings.

"These two frames," resumed Robert, "are the Cathedrals of St. Paul's in London, and St. Peter's at Rome. You perceive, your Honours, that ours is built on the plan of the latter, by Sir Christopher Wren. It was burnt down before that, at

the dreadful fire of London in 1666, and was rebuilt of the finest Portland stone. This is the West portico which you see, one of the most magnificent in the universe, supported by twelve lofty Corinthian pillars, with eight more above, of the Composite order, holding the pediment, on which is finely carved the conversion of St. Paul. The length of the church, from East to West, is five hundred feet, and the height, to the top of the cross, three hundred and forty-four. The cupola measures one hundred and forty-five; round it is a range of columns, with niches, and the entablature supports a noble gallery, surrounded with a fine stone balustrade; and on the summit of the dome you see an elegant balcony, from whence rises the lanthorn, adorned with Corinthian columns; at the top is the ball, and over it the cross. There is an extensive view round London, and the distant counties, both from the gallery and the balcony. The figures of the twelve Apostles are cut in stone, and placed

placed over the West, North, and South portico, with a fine marble statue of Queen Anne in front, dressed in her royal robes, and holding her insignias. It is a pity, your Honours," added he, "that we can't have a view of the inside of this noble church; there's the geometrical stairs, most astonishingly supported, and the curious whispering gallery; together with the inside of the church, finely paved with black and white marble, and supported by some noble pillars; and the beautiful painting withinside the cupola, the figures of an immense size, but at the distance below, do not appear larger than life. The windows round the dome form a beautiful view from the aisle, besides all the grand monuments, so well deserving attention."

"And what a pity too," said Lord de Courcy, "that one of the noblest edifices in London should be destroyed, in point of view, by being confined in so limited a space, that its beauties are lost in its own magnitude."

"Here," went on Robert, "you behold the noble ruins of the Castle of Cashel, in Ireland; it is built on a summit, and overlooks the famous old city. It was formerly the residence of the Cormacks, Kings of Munster; part of it was erected in the ninth century, and the remainder in the fourteenth; the walls of the building are in tolerable preservation, particularly the towers, one of which you perceive is round, and the others square. There was a Cathedral belonging to it, in which Divine Service was constantly celebrated, till the roof falling, put a stop to the regular worship there. The record I hold," added he, "says that there are many curious remains withinside, particularly Cormack's hall and chapel, over which, by a narrow flight of broken winding steps, are the vestiges of his library and closet. Below, after passing the great entrance door, is the remains of a noble arch, curiously formed of flintstones, joined together without any kind of mortar of cement; the side-walls have totally disappeared,

disappeared, and its support is the corner stone works rising from below, and originally uniting in a semicircle, at the centre of the arch, which is destroyed, and its place supplied by a drooping elder, twined round with ivy, which gives it a most romantic appearance, and throws a religious solemnity round the venerable pile, particularly as it hangs over the middle of an oblong square of ground, wherein are several monuments, belonging to the neighbouring gentry, and the ruins of the Cathedral leading from it, where repose the ashes of many a former chief and dignified prelate, on which the long grass waves its feeble head, and the bleak wind, through the open casements, whistles the mournful requiem. Within the standing walls, on each side of the square, are a flight of spiral stone steps, in tolerable preservation, which wind to the summit of the building, and from which different avenues project leading to other steps throughout it; but these are mostly decayed, steep

Robert's traditionary stories again created a laugh to his auditors, except old Margarette, who, raising her eyes and hands, emphatically gave thanks, that *she* did not live in a country where the devil made such flying visits.

"But if his black majesty does visit that country, my good dame," said Lord de Courcy, "he must come in a borrowed shape, to behold it with envy, for no evil or pernicious creature inhabits Ireland; and whatever mischief arises to it, must be from the discontent of a *few* of its own people, who would perhaps cast away their present blessings, to grasp at others they could never attain."

"This one," continued Robert, "is the last our defaced catalogue allows us to trace. It is the ruins of the Castle of Manooth, in Ireland, belonging to the noble and respected family of "Kildare." That name, and the singular preservation of one of its

heirs there by a baboon, notes it as worthy of memorial. I may not be accurate in the story," added he, "as the manuscript is so imperfect, and I can only trace it from a faint recollection of having heard it. A fire happened somewhere in or near the Castle, and the boy, then an infant, had been left in the cradle by his nurse, from which he was taken between the paws of a favourite baboon, and conveyed to the highest battlements of the building, where the creature played with the baby, alternately caressing and sporting with it, to the consternation and terror of the gathering spectators, who crowded together heaps of straw, hay, and feather beds, least the child should fall, or be thrown from the paws of his frolicksome nurse; but the creature, as if ordained by Providence to preserve the noble heir of this respected house, kept fast hold of his charge, while he paraded about, as if enjoying his triumph, and the fears of the crowd below him; and in the mean time, some persons

of the Castle stole gently up, for fear of alarming the infant's protector, who, on seeing them, quietly resigned his charge, and descending with them, the baby, it is said, smiled in the creature's face, as if thanking him for his deliverance. And from that time," added Robert, "the family carry the baboon as the crest and supporter of their arms."

"If this story is true," said Lord de Courcy, "it was indeed a wonderful event, and we must suppose that Providence interfered in the preservation of the infant; for if its safety was endangered by the fire, its life was surely doubly risked, from the place where it was conveyed, and the insecurity of its holder."

"That it did happen, my Lord," replied Robert, "is beyond any doubt, but that I may err in the minute particulars, is also possible, as I have already told your Lordship I am not perfect in my recollection of them."

Having

Having nothing further to examine here, they proceeded on to the gallery—a magnificent structure, repaired and altered some years back, under the direction of the great architect Inigo Jones, who lived in part of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and was known by the name of the "British Vitruvius."

To the right of this gallery, the windows, spacious and uniform, extended in a line between spaces of Corinthian columns, forming a semicircle, to support a gilt railing, on whose balustrade rested the bust of many a celebrated poet, both ancient and modern; fronting to which, were the portraits of several eminent crowned heads of England, with some of the most noted characters of each reign.

The venerable biographer again resumed his office—"We will begin with the busts, your Honours," said he; "but I fear the catalogue will be found so imperfect, both with

with them and the pictures, that many renowned characters must be passed over.

"Here," he began, pointing to the first, "is the head of Shakespear, the father of dramatic poets; born in the year 1564, at Stratford on Avon, and to whose memory is erected a monument in Westminster Abbey.

"The next to him is Milton, author of Paradise Lost, which must have gained him one in the world he is gone to, for he died, the glory of the English nation, in 1674.

"Near him you see Pope, whose birthplace he renowned in his poem of 'Windsor Forest,' and who quitted this world, deservedly regretted, in the year 1744. His Essay on Woman was rather severe, and his Dunciad satirical; but his works, taken in general, will ever be read with admiration and delight.

"Next to him is Goldsmith, of Irish birth; had he never written more than The Vicar of Wakefield, and The Deserted Village, they would have stamped his fame; but

but united to his other writings, he classes as a poet of eminence.

"Beside him is Waller, whose sweetness of language invites the reader to peruse him. He celebrated his scornful mistress, the Lady Dorothy Sidney, daughter of Lord Leicester, under the name of Sacharissa, whose contempt kept him a self-exile many years from his native country, in which he died, lamented, in the year 1687.

"Addison comes after him, the author of the tragedy of Cato, under whose bust the two following lines expresses his character:

'He taught us how to live, and oh! too high
A price for knowledge, taught us how to die.'

"Horace, the most judicious of Latin poets, comes next, followed by the great Virgil; with Sallustius, the Roman historian, next him; and Voltaire, the French deist, near him.

"Here," continued the historian, "is the

the head of the sublime Petrarch, who, in the romantic rocks of Vaucluse, studied poetry, and the charms of the absent Laura. Near him is Ovid, the master of the art of love. Next is Thomson, whose fame the Seasons established: And after him, Prior, who wrote in the reigns of Queen Anne and George the First; his poetry is sublime and moral; and had this young lady," added the old man, with a respectful gallantry, bowing his white head to Emily, "had this young lady lived in his days, or he in her's, it is not alone by name she could have disputed her title to the 'Nut-brown Maid.'"

Emily curtsied to the worthy old creature's happy compliment, and looked more pleased at it than she would at the adulation of a dozen ball-room beaux; nor did he appear less so, at observing he had not offended her by his freedom.

He again resumed his account.—"Here, my

my Lord and Ladies, you see the bust of Gay, who died in the year 1732. The two lines beneath it, written by Mr. Pope, will give his character fully :

> 'Of manners gentle, of affections mild;
> In wit a man, simplicity a child.'

"Beside him is the head of Madame de Sevigne, esteemed for the sentiment and elegance of her pen.

"Next her is Salvator Rosa, both poet and painter, who was some time in disgrace for the satire of his writings. He was one of the associates of Massaniello, the celebrated Neapolitan rebel. Here is the head of Lady Mary Wortley Montague, whose descriptive letters must ever be read with admiration. Next to her, you see that of Young, whose Night Thoughts, though sublime, are too obscure for general penetration. And after him, Butler, whose admired Hudibras, and *Promises* of Charles the Second, were too futile to prevent him dying for want in 1680.

"Here,"

"Here," continued Robert, "is the head of the beautiful Elizabeth Rowe, whose public and private virtues set her up as an example for her sex to copy after. She was known in her youth by the name of Philomela. She was faithful to her God, her husband, and possessed unbounded charity and benevolence to all her fellow-creatures. She died, 1737, in the sixty-third year of her age, and her death was, as her life, serene, composed, and happy. The last," cried Robert, with peculiar energy, "though not a poet, is placed here as the nation's glory, the admiration of the world, the parent of philosophy, and the enlightener of nature—the great and matchless Sir Isaac Newton, born 1642 and died 1726; he is interred near the choir door in Westminster Abbey, and a noble monument placed over him; but his noblest monument is his works, which will last till the general dissolution of nature sinks Nature's works in eternal oblivion."

The

The pictures next demanded the attention of the company; they were, in general, in good preservation, notwithstanding their being so many years neglected; but they were hung against a wainscoted wall, which had in a great measure saved them from being injured by the damp; and the thick coat of dust which was swept off them, had served as a covering to the paintings, which being the work of the best masters, were not to be defaced by the attack of the broom or the towel.

Lord de Courcy, though a good Christian in his heart, broke the tenth commandment as he viewed those neglected treasures; for he very sincerely coveted them as his own, when he would cherish them as the valuable remembrances of his country's most boasted departed glories.

Robert turning over his imperfect detailer, which grew more illegible as he opened it, from the damp and mildew having

ing adhered to the parchment in the roll, by which the writing was defective, and as it was just at this time that its assistance was most wanted to him, it unavoidably occasioned many of the portraits to be passed over unknown. But as most of the subjects had been either the possessor or the supporter of England's brightest glory, its throne, we shall open, as we hope it ever will be found—taking the lead of every other.

END OF VOL. I.

LANE, MINERVA PRESS, LEADENHALL-STREET.

THE HEIRS OF VILLEROY.

A ROMANCE.

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THE

HEIRS OF VILLEROY.

A Romance.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY

HENRIETTA ROUVIERE.

AUTHOR OF

LUSSINGTON ABBEY, &c.

As by degrees, from long, though gentle rains,
Great floods arise, and overflow the plains;
So men from little faults to great proceed,
Guilt grows on guilt, and crimes do crimes succeed.

VOL. II.

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PREFACE.

THE success which attended my first literary attempt, (although classed in the insignificant rank of novels) induces me to venture, in a second production of my pen, the opinion of the public; and while I solicit its future favours, trust to its generosity, more than to any self-imagined merit, for its continued approbation.

Though

Though in my works there should not be found any thing deserving high praise, I trust there will not be met therein to call down harsh censure. In a subject so trifling, as what a novel generally produces, it is only the tendency of the moral which can demand attention; and a discourse, however light in matter, may convey an exemplary one, by the contrast of vice, with its lovely opponent, virtue: and he must be a cynic indeed, who could only discover the blemishes of the first, without contemplating its defects as a foil placed beside a brilliant, to shew, by comparison, the latter's superior lustre.

Throughout

Throughout the busy scene of life, does it not too frequently happen that oppressed virtue sinks beneath triumphant vice, particularly when adversity, menacing the devoted victim, leaves her in the fangs of its merciless attendants?

Who will come forward to assert the cause of virtuous indigence?—Who will brave the strength of the powerful oppressor, to rescue suffering virtue from exulting vice?

The individual possessing virtues, which might render him or her an example worthy of imitation, becomes, by those very

virtues, the pointed object of malignity. Even the name of friendship is sometimes prophaned, to aim more securely the envenomed shaft: And what barb more corroding, than the armed tongue of malevolence, directed from the heart of an imagined friend, who, too probably, under that name, having already injured the credulous victim, in the tenderest concerns, seeks to conceal their own hypocrisy, by secretly arraigning those virtues, known to them but by theory, and like the ass in lion's skin, or the jay in borrowed plumes, deck themselves in the trophies of the despoiled wretch, hoping to elude beneath them the eye of scrutiny and justice? The envenomed

envenomed shaft, aimed by malice in secret, wounds deeply and securely. The attack of an open enemy, truth can parry; but the coward who stabs in the dark, inflicts the wound unperceived, and the assassin escapes unscared. Vice triumphs, and virtue, sinking under the impregnated arrow, whose poison diffuses itself like a contagion through the bosom open to imbibe its direful tendencies, is left to struggle against its effects, with only conscious innocence to assist in eradicating its pernicious consequences. But Heaven is too just to allow of the continued triumph of the injurer over the injured; sooner or later the concealing veil is withdrawn. Like the murderer

murderer Cain, the eye of God beholds and judges; and His unerring wisdom stamps on the guilty conscience—the murderer of reputation, of honour, and of truth!

In the Dedication to my first Work, I have been told, that in suing for lenity, I stooped to servility, and appealed for clemency through the language of flattery. To this I reply—if I have been servile, it has arisen from a venial mistake—from a fixed opinion that the judges of our fate, the deciders of our fame, should be approached with respect, and their favour conciliated with diffidence. The language of flattery was to me therefore the diction of

of truth; and the servility I have been accused of, but a just tribute of deference, which even, at this moment, my opinion scarcely allows to have been erroneous.

HENRIETTA ROUVIERE.

THE

THE

HEIRS OF VILLEROY.

CHAP. I.

"Love gives esteem, and then he gives desert;
He either finds equality, or makes it:
Like Death, he makes no difference in degrees,
But plains and levels all."

DRYDEN.

WE left the party as they were proceeding in their review of the historical subjects belonging to the gallery, where Robert, once more consulting the imperfect catalogue he held, resumed his office.

"This gallery, your honours," he began, "formerly contained, with those, the portraits of the Saxon Sovereigns; but as they were very fast falling to decay, when it was improved by Inigo Jones, my Lord would not allow them to be replaced, till they had been repaired, as was then his intention; but they never were, and they lie amongst a heap of lumber, in another part of the Castle. We shall commence, my Lords and Ladies, at this one.

"Henry the Second, son of Empress Matilda. At a very early period of life he was engaged in supporting his mother's right to the throne, which she lost, and he afterwards sat on.

"This is Edward the First, and near him his Queen Eleanor, who sucked the poison from the wound he received by an envenomed arrow.

"The next we trace is Edward the Second, the unfortunate martyr of Lord Maltravers, as before mentioned.

"Here is the great and victorious Edward the

the Black Prince, so called from the colour of his plume, the son of Edward the Third; the three feathers he wears, he gloriously won of the King of Bohemia; and they since belong to the Prince of Wales. The motto round is *Ich Dien*—I serve.

"That near him is Henry the Fourth, and his Queen Joan, widow of the Duke of Bretagne.

"The next we can discover," went on Robert, "is Edward the Fourth; and beside him his two sons, who were murdered by their uncle, the Duke of Gloucester, afterwards Richard the Third. Near them, his Queen, Lady Eleanor Gray; and the frame next her represents the beautiful and unfortunate Jane Shore, the mistress of Edward, who, after his death, was disgraced and abandoned, and ended her days in a wretched place near London, which is since known by the name of Shoreditch.

"Those which follow immediately," added he, "we cannot trace, till we arrive at Henry the Seventh, Earl of Richmond,

who conquered Richard the Third, at the battle of Bosworth; and near him, Elizabeth his Queen, which was the union of the white and red roses. Beside her, the good and pious Margaret, mother to Henry, with her three husbands following, the Earl of Richmond, Duke of Buckingham, and Lord Stanley.

"Here is the aged Duchess of York, whose life, this paper says, was eventful.—Her husband fell, fighting for the crown, at the battle of Wakefield; she saw her son Edward, King, dethroned, and reinstated; witnessed his death, and her second son, the murderer of her two grand-children, wear the crown. She learned of a conspiracy against him, and saw her granddaughter married to his mortal enemy, Henry the Seventh.

"Next, your honours, behold the inconstant Henry the Eighth; and after him his unfortunate wives. First, the beautiful Jane Seymour; Anne of Cleves, whom his Majesty distinguished by the Flanders mare;

mare; Catherine Howard; Catherine of Arragon; and the celebrated ill-fated Anne Boylen, or Bullen.

"In this frame," continued the detailer, "you see the famous Elizabeth Barton, known by the name of the Maid of Kent, who pretended to divine inspiration, and who threatened Henry with the vengeance of Heaven, did he divorce Catherine of Arragon. She was burnt in 1505, and four of her accomplices executed at the same time.

"Here follows Cardinal Wolsey, the most princely subject that ever lived; he kept a retinue of more than eight hundred servants, amongst which were many nobles and gentlemen.

"Near him is the famous Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex, who, from a common soldier, rose, by his own powers, to be Lord High Chamberlain of England, in which elevated station he behaved with moderation and charity; but his enemies, and the marriage of Henry with Catherine Howard,

worked his downfall, and his death; for he was beheaded, with particular cruelty, in 1540.

"The next we find is Edward the Sixth; and near him the lovely martyr of ambition not her own, Lady Jane Gray, daughter to the Marquis of Dorset, and grand-daughter to Henry the Seventh. Edward the Sixth had declared the Princess Mary, the daughter of Henry the Eighth, his successor; and on his death, the policy of the Duke of Northumberland proclaimed Lady Jane Queen, by the Privy Council; on which Mary, with a powerful army, marched to London, and was crowned at Westminster; while the unfortunate Jane, who had opposed all those measures, was implicated as well as the guilty; nor could her youth, or her innocence, soften the heart of the vindictive Mary. Her father, father-in-law, and equally guiltless husband, lost their lives, and she was beheaded privately in the Tower. Her death was resigned, for she only lamented her fate,

as

as involving the husband she loved, and the parent she respected.

"Near her is the wicked and bigotted Queen Mary, whose reign, beginning in murder, was waded through in bloodshed and cruelties.

"Here," he continued, "is the great Elizabeth, who, as a Sovereign, has been unequalled, but whose imprisonment of Mary is a stigma on her honour, and the cruelty of her death a reproach to her humanity; which throws a shade on her memory, never to be removed, even by the recollection of her otherwise glorious reign.

"Next her appears her once great favourite, the Earl of Essex, whose unhappy death originated in his own rashness, and from which he might have escaped, but for the treachery of the person to whom he confided the testimony of the Queen's promised favour.

"Sir Philip Sidney, the most elegant and accomplished man of his time. He

was also a favourite of Elizabeth, till he opposed her marriage with the Duke of Anjou, for which he was some time in disgrace. He would have been chosen King of Poland, had he not preferred the service of his country to any sovereignty.—He served under his uncle, the Earl of Leicester, with the highest bravery; and was the author of the Arcadia.

"Next to him," continued Robert, looking over his directory, "we find Sir Francis Drake, the magnanimous English Admiral, who defeated the Spanish Armada; and the terror of his name was so great, that Don Pedro de Valez struck his flag to him without fighting.

"By him is the portrait of the unfortunate Sir Walter Raleigh, whose gallantry to Elizabeth first introduced him to her Majesty's notice; for as she was at one time going to pass over a very dirty spot, he pulled off his new blue cloak, and laid it under her feet. After which the Queen sent for him to Court, and employed him in

in many high services, in which he signalized himself to her satisfaction. But as the favours of Court are sometimes fluctuating, on the accession of James the First, Sir Walter's enemies accused him of being in a plot to set the crown on the head of Lady Arabella Stuart, for which he was tried and condemned; and for the space of thirteen years, kept a prisoner, continually under the idea of approaching death, but as frequently reprieved. He was, at length, set at liberty; but, unfortunately, his pardon was omitted to pass the Great Seal; and failing in an expedition he was sent on to Guinea, he was, at his return, again imprisoned, and beheaded, according to his former sentence, through the influence of the Spanish Ambassador over the weakest of Kings.

"Next him is seen the great statesman, Sir Francis Walsingham, so highly esteemed by Queen Elizabeth; and in the frame beside him, his daughter, who was married to three of the most distinguished men of

the age:—first, the before mentioned Sir Philip Sidney, the Earl of Essex, and Richard, Earl of Clanricard, whose picture is near her.

"Here," continued he, "in all the pride of loveliness, you see the beautiful and admired Mary, Queen of Scots, no less celebrated for charms, than for her misfortunes. She was imprisoned eighteen years by Elizabeth; and by her orders, (over the Queen of another kingdom) beheaded in Fotheringay Castle. Those three frames following are the King of France, Lord Darnley, and the Earl of Bothwell, husbands to Mary.

"The next," went on Robert, "is James the First of England, and Sixth of Scotland, son of the martyred Mary; who, though he detested Elizabeth, as the murderer of his mother, respected her administration, and continued her ministers, the Earls of Dorset and Salisbury. Beside him is his consort, Anne, sister of Christian the Fourth, King of Denmark.

"And

"And here," added he, pointing to a diminutive figure, "is Jeoffry Hudson, the Lilliputian, who was presented to James, from beneath the cover of a pie, at the Duke of Buckingham's table; and who remained at Court, as his Majesty's dwarf, and afterwards as Henrietta's, the consort of Charles the First, till the troubles of that Monarch brought him to France with the Queen, as her Page; but here he was driven from his great station, and encountered many severe trials, being a prisoner with the Turks for many years; and when he afterwards returned to London, met there the same fate, on account of his religion.

"This frame contains the portrait of the unhappy Charles the First, who, after suffering many difficulties and dangers, was at last beheaded in the year 1649.

"Next to him," continued Robert, "your honours find the celebrated Oliver Cromwell, one of the most extraordinary persons ever heard of, who, from a respectable, though obscure birth, became the

Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England. His last remains, in 1658, were more pompously interred than any Monarch's of the nation.

"And beside is Patriot Hampden, who so gloriously fought to maintain the rights and liberty of the people, against the encroachments of arbitrary power. He lost his life by his own impetuosity to attack Prince Rupert, at Chalgrove field; for finding the Prince suddenly face about, Hampden, contrary to the advice of the officers, advanced towards him, without waiting for the main body coming up. In this skirmish he was wounded; yet, notwithstanding his being so violent an opponent of the King, his Majesty had such an esteem for him, that he sent his own physician, Dr. Chinner, to visit him. He died the 24th of June, 1643, and his name and memory will ever be revered, equally with his private as his public character.

"Here you see the handsome Charles the Second, the most gallant monarch ever lived;

lived; and after him, some of his favourite mistresses. First, Duchess of Richmond, with whom he was so much in love, that he sought a divorce from his Queen, Catherine of Portugal, to marry her; next her, the domineering Duchess of Cleveland; and after her, her three sons, the Dukes of Cleveland, Grafton, and Northumberland.

"In this frame, my Lords and Ladies, you see the Duke of Monmouth, first son of Charles the Second. Look at the resemblance between him and his royal father; there is only the difference of a few years in their ages, by which their persons or faces can be distinguished from each other.

"The next is James the Second, who abdicated the throne, and beside him Ann Hyde, to whom he was married, when Duke of York; and his Queen, Mary de Etée. The two next frames represent his Majesty's daughters, by his first wife Anne, Queen Mary, and good Queen Anne.

"The Prince and Princess of Orange, (afterwards William the Third).

"Here

"Here is George the First, Elector of Hanover; and next him, George the Second, who is represented in the coat he wore at the battle of Oudenarde, shot through with holes; his Majesty made it a point to appear in it always on his birth-days, which has often created the mirth of the Court, at the same time that it exhibited the proofs of his bravery, and set an example to his willing soldiers.

"And," added Robert, pulling off his spectacles, "having brought thus far the Potentates of England, long may the house of Brunswick maintain its sovereignty; and the descendants of a George possess its Throne, as the blessing of the nation, and the victorious conqueror of its enemies."

From this noble gallery the party adjourned to the chamber at the further end, conformable in unity of size to that one fronting it, and opposite whose door a plate of polished glass, judiciously placed, reflected in its distant counterpart, and gave

gave to the enquiring eye an inexhaustible extent of view.

The hangings of this apartment resembled those of the opposite one, though differently disposed; it was likewise pannelled with rose wood, divided by interstices of silver moulding, between whose spaces the draperies descended from the festoon knot. Here hung the frameless pictures of venerable sires, chaste matrons, laurelled sons, beautiful daughters, stiff bachelors, and antiquated virgins, with aunts, uncles, and cousins, of the Fitzwalter genealogy, from the first of the name to the present owner of it; but so sallow from age, so disfigured with damp, and so susceptible to the touch, that the beautiful daughters retired from observation, the maiden aunts shrunk beneath the rude hand, the formal bachelor fell under the hasty scrutiny, and the laurel of the hero disappeared at an attempt to investigate it.

Old

Old dame Margery advancing towards one of them, with a respectful reverence; but whether made to the company or the tattered vestiges of the lady she pointed to, it was difficult to tell, but it is more than probable her fears for the dead called it forth, as much as her respect for the living—

"This," said she, "was the *portrage* of Lady *Grinalda* Fitzwalter."

"A curious name," said Emily.

"Margarette means Geraldine, young lady," cried Robert; "the Lady Geraldine Fitzwalter; she was wife to ——"

"I wish you would hold your tongue," exclaimed the old dame, rather pettishly, to Robert. "I am sure you have talked enough for a year, and may give somebody else leave to say a word now. So, your honours," continued she, "this lady, after the death of Sir Marmaduke, her husband, *foundered* this Castle."

"Founded, Margarette," said Robert, softly, to her.

"Found

"Found it!" exclaimed Margarette: "you know nothing about the matter, Robert. Found it, indeed!—her money found it, your honours; for she built every stone of it herself, on the top of a black *monster*."

"A Monastery, you fool," cried Robert, out of patience. "Lady Geraldine founded this Castle on the ruins of a Monastery, belonging, in former days, to black Canons."

"Aye," cried Margarette, "and a wonder it was not blowed up by them; for, as the people said, and I say too, it was a most *scurrilous* thing of her, to build a Castle on such holy ground, over the ashes of the blessed saints and *martyrdoms*."

"It might be considered sacrilegious," said Emily, smiling at her; "and very possibly has given rise to many of the strange reports concerning it."

"That it did, lady," answered Margarette, with a significant meaning of her head. "It gave rise to the whole body of them, I believe,

lieve, for my part; and they do make such a work here at times, along with the rest of the gentry, that I have often thought the whole building was coming about our ears."

"Nonsense," said Robert, with an angry look at her. "Do you want to terrify the young ladies out of their lives?—Pray," added he, "your honours, don't let this old fool's silly fancies frighten you. If she was only to hear a mouse stir, and there are plenty of them running about the Castle, or the wind blow hard through a crevice, she'd fancy all the poor quiet inhabitants of the parish church-yard were come to hold a meeting in it."

"It's no nonsense at all," cried Margarette, quite offended at having her understanding impeached before the quality;—"and you know it is not, Robert. Don't you remember, of all nights in the year, last Christmas eve, when you and I were sitting drinking a drop of the old ale together, in the housekeeper's room, that we heard

heard the great door below give such a bang. I dropped the horn, (I had just emptied it, too) then comes a foot along the dark passage; I heard the chains rattle, as plain as I hear myself speaking now, and all the old rusty *armry* in the great room over us went clitter clatter when the door shut. Lord have mercy on me!—Don't you remember it, Robert?—I thought I'd have died away with fear; and when Arthur came in with the message from his mother about the goose pye, I'm sure I took him for one of the ghosts, and was in such a way that the poor lad could not tell what to make of me."

"And if such is the general cause of your fears, my good Margarette," cried Emily, looking very serious, "upon my word, I think Robert need not be angry with you, as you seem to have had a *substantial* reason for them at that time."

The rest of the rooms at this side of the Castle were not in a state to demand attention,

attention, and were just casually looked into; and the party quitting them, they were once more left deserted, and fastened up by their old guardian. They then proceeded to the opposite wing, which contained dressing-rooms, sleeping apartments, and the study of Lord Fitzwalter, from which many of the most valuable books and papers had been removed by his Lordship; and those which remained were too decayed and dusty, to admit of any examination. One of the doors here was passed over by Margarette, who was now their guide, and Emily asking to see into it, the old woman replied, that it opened to the dressing-room and reading-closet of their present Lady, which were also adjoining a certain chamber, that, for particular reasons, could not be looked into.

Anna thought of Lady Fitzwalter's commission, and that this must be the closet she named to her; which if Margarette had so much reluctance to open now, she might

might probably refuse her admittance there, when she asked it. But again she considered, that having the key given her by her Ladyship to produce, as an authority for her orders, it would be a sufficient testimony for the old woman to obey them.

The two remaining wings of the Castle were entirely out of repair; one in particular, which appeared almost dangerously so, and the other very little better, except the three rooms which had been appropriated to the use of the two little infants of Villeroy; and those even had been stripped of some of their furniture, when the children were sent to the wood-house, by the direction of Lord Fitzwalter, for the improvements which he had spoken of, respecting the interior of this edifice.

They one and all lamented that such a noble building should be suffered to go to ruin, or that its valuable contents were left to perish unheeded and unnoticed.

Anna

Anna felt particularly concerned at it, at the same time that she experienced so sweet a sensation, as she contemplated its fading beauties, that to her it appeared a terrestrial paradise, and possessed of an attractive charm, which she thought could fix her there for ever, without a wish for quitting it, except what related to her beloved friends, and her dear, inestimable Lady Fitzwalter.

The romantic disposition of young De Courcy found at Eure Castle the highest gratification it could desire: its soft sombre shades were to his taste; and he preferred the view of the rising sun, from beneath the eastern hills, to the varying lights of a party-coloured illumination; the towering hill, cloathed in brightest verdure, and the rich foliage of the lofty branches, to the splendid decorations of a drawing-room; while the gentle murmurs of a ripling brook, or the louder fall of a distant cataract, sounded to his ears more harmoniously

than the melting cadences of a Signora, or the swelling strains of a concerto. Added to these, the gentler accents of the graceful Anna sweetened each lovely scene her lovelier self gave charms to.

It was here that the heart of De Courcy, formed by nature in sensibility's mould, expanded to love and Anna: And here also, retired from general observation, and more particularly marking the tender looks of her lover, that Anna discovered she had one.

The idea of being loved by De Courcy gave to her mind the sweetest emotions of pleasure; while the dread of hereafter becoming the object of his contempt, through the wretched and unalterable baseness of her origin, was an alloy to her happiness, and frequently drove away the hopes her heart would tenderly admit.

Yet again would she reflect, that if, indeed, the object of De Courcy's affections, and

and that he esteemed her with the same sincerity her own heart was capable of feeling, would he not generously overlook the disparity of her birth, which could not attach as a crime to her? Were he placed in her situation, and she the heiress of Lord de Courcy, with what pleasure would she descend to his rank, to convince him that love knew no such distinction! But ah! whither did her imagination lead her? Had De Courcy ever said he loved her? —had he ever given her reason to suspect she had more influence over his affections, than her friend Emily?—Never. Might she not then be deceived in a belief of what she wished, and vainly attribute to a dearer sentiment the kind attentions with which he honoured her?

But Anna was not vain of her personal charms, and of her rank she could not. Fortune she had none, unless it should be the pleasure of her generous guardians to give her one; and although she had every right to

to conjecture, from the dear and paternal affection with which they regarded her, that she would not be left destitute of some.—She entertained no thought of ever sharing, in a proportionate degree, the wealth of her worthy benefactors. True, she had every wish, even to the most trifling, gratified; and her appearance was such as their daughter could make. Mrs. Jeffries deputed her acting mistress of the house; nothing was right that her dear Anna did not order; every thing was approved of which she directed. The servants were under her command; and a superb chariot was known as belonging to Miss Jeffries. The first fashions came to her from London, and her bills discharged, without her ever knowing their extent. Did she go to a public assembly, or a private ball, she was sure of some rich appropriate present for the occasion: and she attired her elegant person with such chaste delicacy, that every eye, as well as her partial protectors, dwelt on her enraptured. Exclu-

sive of all these, every first of the month her kind patron put into her purse ten guineas for pocket-money, which was never enquired further about; and Anna's heart, "open as day to melting charity," extended her hand to the wants of her fellow-creatures, as freely to give as to receive. On her setting out for Eure Castle, Mr. Jeffries gave to her a fifty pound note, saying, as he tenderly pressed her delicate fingers on the paper—

"Should it be insufficient for your demands till I see you again, my child," and the dear old man smiled placidly on her, "you know where to find your banker; draw on him without reserve, my beloved Anna, and fear not his honouring your draft."

"Dear, respected friends," cried she, pressing a hand of Mr. and Mrs. Jeffries to her lips, "your Anna's heart is gratefully sensible of all your favours; this is only one out of the many thousand she has

has received of you. How inadequate to my feelings would be any words! here, "Silence must be eloquence."

"Dearest Anna," repeated they together, "why mention favours? are you not the child of our love, and, as such, entitled to an only child's claim?"

"Ah," cried Anna, dissolving into tears, "should I be ever claimed as the child of any other parents, oh! what will then become of the wretched Anna?"

"Away with those fears, my lovely apprehensive girl," said Mr. Jeffries. "Who dare to claim you?—Who has any right?—It is nearly fifteen years since you were given—mind that, my Anna, you were *given* to Mrs. Jeffries. Therefore, if even demanded by the person who acknowledged herself your mother, and of the truth of which there were only her own words, she would have no right to you. She gave you freely to my wife—but she's dead by this time, I dare say," added he, "or we would, probably, have heard something of

her; unless, indeed, she has absented herself through fear of an investigation. But should she ever come forward, my dear Anna, depend on it, I'll not resign you, without the law forces me to it; and not even then, till she fully proves her authority."

"And, thank Heaven!" said Mrs. Jeffries, "the two persons who were present at the time, are still living; nor would I part with Mrs. Glynn, or old Williams, the butler, for younger servants, least such an event might happen, and their testimony be wanted. So make yourself easy on that head, my love," continued Mrs. Jeffries, "and on every other also. The world is not to be acquainted with the private concerns of families; and though you are known not to be our daughter, no person shall ever come at the truth of your not having a right to the name of Jeffries, unless it should be your own wish."

Anna had it on her lips to tell them of the

the discovery she had made of herself to Emily; but she as quickly suppressed her words. It might not be pleasing to her friends, and in the bosom of Emily she was convinced the secret was secure.

The sweet girl was pressed to the hearts of her only parents, as she parted from them, for the first time, to remain so long absent; and as she returned the embrace, the tear which trembled in her blue eyes was communicated to theirs, and spoke it the parting of a dear and justly-beloved child, from the kindest and tenderest of parents.

CHAP. II.

"Oh! it came o'er her ear like the sweet south
That breathes upon a bank of violets;
——— Stealing and giving odour."

SHAKESPEARE.

THE morning sun had shot his lucid beams above the hills, and breaking through the aperture of the moth-eaten window-curtains, played on the lovely face of Emily, who opening her bright eyes, and perceiving that her sweet companion still slept, she gently stole from her side, and hastened to the casement, to behold the enchanting

enchanting prospect presented by the beautiful hand of God and nature. The forest trees waved their tall heads to the sportive zephyrs; and on their trembling leaves, the glittering dew-drop suspended in bright prismatic tints. The sweet songster of the morning, bounding from his verdant shade, soared on high, displaying his variegated plumage in the brilliant rays of day, and tuning his little throat to hail its return with notes of joy.

Emily hastily attired herself, and throwing on a large chip hat, carelessly tied with pink ribband, which heightened the loveliness of her fine brunette countenance, quitted the chamber, for the purpose of walking over to the distant hills, which so sweetly invited the morning ramble. But on reaching the door leading to the corridore, she found, to her mortification, it was fast on the outside; nor could all her efforts open it; for as it shut with a spring, whoever had last

passed it had, inadvertently, closed it too roughly, by which the ladies were made state prisoners. She was therefore obliged to return; and not knowing how to employ herself, thought of examining behind the arras for the door she had once before fancied concealed there.

With little difficulty she disengaged the rotten tapestry from their fastenings; and, as she had conjectured, a door appeared beneath it, secured by a slight rusty bolt, which, with as little trouble, she drew aside, and entered a large room, in a most decayed state, and which seemed to have belonged, either as a dressing or studying-room, to that she had left, but was, at present, a receptacle for lumber; amongst which she perceived many of the old historical pictures mentioned by Robert.

She took up one of fresher appearance than the rest; it was the representation of a beautiful woman, in rather a modern *costume*,

tume, and whose features struck her with the strong resemblance to her fair friend Anna's.

"Hah," thought Emily, with her usual vivacity, "is my lovely friend, then, of royal extraction?—Was her mother descended from the favourite of a William or a George? Who can say she is not a Duchess in her own right?—The offspring of royalty selling brimstone matches—very possible; Rosamond was ill-fated—Jane Shore died in a ditch—and why not suppose an Anna equally unfortunate?—I shall bend my knee to her when next we meet; and if I don't raise her consequence, I shall, at least, raise her smiles at my respectful homage."

She laid down the picture, and proceeded towards a second door, at the further end of the room, which opened without any difficulty, and a long narrow dark passage presented itself before her. The walls

were loose, and in many parts dangerous, which, at first, alarmed her to pass them; but her curiosity to see where it led to surmounted her fear, and she cautiously advanced over some heaps of fallen stones and rubbish, reaching at length a chasm in the wall, which seemed to have been once the place of a door, but had been stopt up with brick, which had given way, or been pulled down. Through this aperture Emily continued her course, arriving at a steep and winding flight of stone steps, loose, broken, and dismal. She paused a few moments, to consider whether she would attempt their descent; but again curiosity prevailed, and she gently proceeded, till reaching a small square lobby, a second range of steps presented themselves, and the air blowing fresh from below, told her she was near some entrance or outlet. It might, perhaps, bring her to the outside of the building, and she preferred trying the way before her, to encountering that she had come a second time.

Emily

Emily again moved slowly on, and reaching the bottom of the steps in safety, she came to a rude arch, thickly overhung with ivy and moss, which was the entrance of the great south tower, and where she beheld before her the dark and shady walks of the venerable forest, into whose recesses she plunged, to enjoy the delightful ramble she had at first designed. She walked a considerable way, still following the track she had marked out; sometimes pausing to listen to the wood musicians' concert, at others to pluck the wild flowers, with which she adorned her placid bosom; when, on a sudden, her pursuit was interrupted by the flowing of a clear broad stream, dashing over the pebbly bed, and winding through the mazes of the rich landscape around it. She looked to see for some place of crossing, and beheld, not far off, a range of stepping-stones for that purpose, whither she was advancing, when her ears and her senses were suddenly entranced by the soft breathings of a flageolet, sounding—

"Sweet as the Shepherd's pipe upon the mountain."

She sat down on the bank, attentively listening to the notes its skilful performer drew forth; but while it sounded close to her, the musician was invisible. It ceased after a time, and she heard it no more.

"This," thought Emily, "is my first adventure, and I'll pursue it; who knows, but I may perchance light on some rural minstrel of this ancient Castle's aerial followers?"

With this idea she descended the bank, and cautiously advanced on the stepping-stones; but ere she was half way over them, the course of the water dazzling her eyes, she lost her equilibrium, and plunged one foot into the stream, which was not of any depth to injure her beyond a trifling wetting, but occasioned an involuntary exclamation; when, at that instant, a youth darting from behind a clump of trees, jumped

jumped in, and catching her in his arms, she was, in a moment, on the opposite bank.

Emily, more alarmed than hurt, soon recovered from her slight apprehensions, and laughing at her own folly, politely returned thanks to her kind assistant, whom she immediately conjectured to be the person whose music had so much charmed her, as his flageolet hung by a belt from his side, which was slung across his shoulder. But if her ears had been attracted by the sweetness of his notes, how much more were they charmed by the accents of his voice, and her looks arrested by the gracefulness of his figure, which was tall, and, notwithstanding the peasant's green dress that covered it, elegant, noble, and commanding. His sun-burnt cheek, whereon the trait of manhood had not yet made its appearance, glowed with the colour of health and content; his full dark eyes comprehended intelligence, and the form of his face was dignified by a Roman contour,

contour, expressive of a soul superior to the station his garb bespoke him of.

As Emily addressed her thanks to him, he gracefully pulled off a little leather cap he wore, and shewed a forehead white as new-fallen snow, round which his amber locks played in waving rings, falling over his neck, where the collar of his shirt was simply fastened by a black string. The youth modestly bowed to her polite acknowledgements, accompanying it with a smile that indicated his services very inadequate to her expressions. She felt ashamed of her ardent gaze, which she was scarcely conscious of for a few minutes; but recollecting herself, hastily turned her eyes to another object, at the same time asking him,

"Were those hills she saw far distant, as she was going to walk to them?" adding, "That the slight emersion her foot had got should not prevent her, as it would be so soon dried."

He

He answered—"They were not more than a mile from the place where they stood. But, Madam," continued he, very respectfully, "though you may not feel any inconvenience from your cold bath, I would presume to advise you against taking that way. It is sometimes difficult, on account of the briars and hedges, which might not be pleasant for you to pass over. Neither do I think it safe for a young lady to go, unattended, at this early hour, through the woods."

"What should I fear?" said Emily; "there are no robbers lurking about the place, I suppose; and the briars or hedges I defy."

"There may be other evils you are not aware of, Madam," answered the youth; "and the innocence which prevents your suspicions might not guard you against their dangers."

Emily was silent for a few moments; the idea of encountering any evil had not

suggested to her before, but his words impressed her with the suspicion of what it was he meant.

"I believe," said she, smiling at him, "your advice is not to be slighted; and I was certainly wrong in my proceedings, for which I am doubly indebted to you in preventing. I will return, but as I feel myself a coward to cross the brook again, must request your further assistance towards leading me over it."

The youth bowed his assent. "But, Madam," said he, "at a short distance from this place, behind yonder tuft of trees, is a rude bridge, formed of the ancient inhabitants of the wood, which will bring you to the other side, without risking a second wetting, and leads a much nearer way to the Castle. If you'll permit me, I'll conduct you to it."

Emily hesitated; she considered the caution he had himself just before given her, and

and believed it would be equally imprudent of her to suffer the guidance of a stranger, in a place she was wholly unacquainted with. She, therefore, thanking him for his information, said she would return by the same way she had come, but did not tell him her reasons for objecting to the other. Either Emily's countenance was too expressive, or the youth too discerning, but he read what passed in her mind, and without presuming to urge her farther, silently presented his hand, and conducted her in safety over to the opposite bank: when again taking off his cap, with a low bow, he was retiring, as she, drawing out her purse, requested of him to return, and made an offer of opening it, with the intent of presenting him some recompense, together, she said, with her grateful thanks for all his services.

The youth's face glowed to the deepest scarlet, and his eyes were lighted up with unusual fire, as, with a respectful wave of his hand, he declined her offer.

"I have

"I have done nothing, Madam," said he, with an animated voice, "to merit a reward; the act is more than equal to one, in being permitted the honour of assisting you, which is the duty of our sex to yours, even at the hazard of their lives; mine has not been endangered, but if it even had, and that you thought I merited any reward, the pleasure I should feel, in believing you considered yourself obliged to me, would be the highest I could receive."

"Forgive me," cried Emily, returning the purse to her pocket; "I did not mean to insult your feelings, which I now see are truly noble; and by them, I confess, I judge your station superior to your outward appearance."

"The soul of man, Madam," he answered, "is not to be judged by externals. The peasant may be born with the sentiments of a Prince. Perhaps you may think me proud in my expressions, and deserving of being humbled; but if it is a vanity unbecoming of me, the error is in my nature, which I would die rather than endeavour

deavour to subdue; and I acknowledge myself no better than I appear to be. My station is as obscure as my origin; for in a cottage, sheltered behind yon tall trees, I drew my first breath, and there I have ever since resided with a widowed mother."

Emily became every moment more astonished; admiration had given place to attention, and a sentiment, hitherto unknown to her, tempered both with respect for this extraordinary youth.

"May I," said Emily, "without hazarding the opinion of being thought impertinently curious, ask you to favour me with your name?"

"The favour is to me, Madam," he replied, "that you condescend to enquire after so unknown a being: and I never heard the name with more pleasure than I now feel in answering to your demand—Arthur."

Emily was again silent; she pondered

on the name, as having somewhere heard it before, and recollected it was old Margarette, who had slightly mentioned a grandson of hers by it. As her curiosity was more interested than it ever had been in her life, she was anxiously solicitous to gratify it, without giving him offence, and she mentioned, in distant terms, the old woman having spoken of such a person.

"I am he, Madam," answered the youth; "and you may judge by that the insignificance of my extraction."

"Yet," said Emily, "humble as it is, your manners and actions, so superior, entitle you to a better situation in life; and indeed (pray don't be hurt at my freedom) how you have acquired such exalted sentiments, is not the least of my astonishment."

The youth again smiled and bowed.

"I have told you, Madam," he replied, "they

"they were born with me; but even in this retired spot, I found opportunities of assisting them, by my grandmother allowing me the use of Lord Fitzwalter's library, and there I have spent many hours indulging my favourite propensity. And this," added he, "accounts for my being more inclined to favour the Castle than the Cottage."

Emily had walked on towards the former during this dialogue, and was now just in sight of it; yet she felt a strange reluctance to quit the company of Arthur, without, perhaps, ever seeing him again, as she had been many days at the Castle, without meeting him till this morning.

"Do you visit your grandmother often?" asked Emily.

"Not since you, Madam, and your party have come to the Castle," he answered; "my mother prohibited me."

"Then she was wrong, in my opinion," said

said Emily; "for with such talents as you possess, the opportunity of bringing them forward to a respectable circle should not be lost. I don't mean of exhibiting them merely to shew them," added she, perceiving he looked grave, "but as the means of introducing you to friends who might be conscious of them, and who would, probably, assist in promoting the future fortunes of their owner."

"I would embrace it with ardour," cried he, energetically; "for I confess my present life is not such as I could wish it to be, and I have often had an idea of carrying a musket in the service of my country, which it is not improbable I may yet do."

"Perhaps," said Emily, "you may meet with a less dangerous, though not so glorious an expedient. A thought has struck me, but I cannot divulge it, till I know what success it is likely to have. I do not scruple to own that you have interested me for your welfare; and to shew you how highly I rate you, I appoint you to meet me

me here to-morrow morning; and if I should be in company, don't let it alarm you. I am not certain that I shall, but it is possible I may. In the mean time, I shall not mention to Margarette any thing of my having met with you; and if you think your mother would be displeased, I don't see any occasion for telling her either, since it has been accidental, and you have not broke her commands by entering the Castle."

"Your words are *my* commands, Madam," he answered, "in every thing, and I shall most punctually observe them."

"And rely on it," said Emily, as she was turning to the Castle, "though I may fail in my application to serve you, in whatever relates to myself you may depend on my friendship."

She hastily quitted him; and entering the Castle, left the agitated Arthur, almost doubtful of the past scene being but a dream. He slowly took his way through the

the wood, while his waking thoughts and nightly dreams gave to his wondering imagination the lovely form of Emily, under the figure of his first friend, and guardian spirit.

Arthur presented himself to her idea unceasingly; it was not only as the most elegant youth she had ever beheld, but without having the advantages of a liberal education, as the most accomplished in his manners. Nature, whose pupil he had been, was not sparing of her instructions; she had imbibed them in his mind from his birth; and except the acquirement of modern graces, the lovely Arthur had little else to learn.

The plan which had struck Emily seemed to her first thoughts as feasible; and in the ardour which attends youthful fancy, she had no sooner thought of it, than she determined on trying it.

Yet

Yet ere she had an opportunity of doing so, a new idea flashed across her mind, and seemed to militate against the laudable intentions of her heart.

Young De Courcy was going on his travels, under the care of his tutor, the respectable Doctor Barclay, and they were to commence in the course of a few weeks. The time was not actually fixed, but his Lordship wished it not to be delayed longer, as the young man was past his nineteenth year, and the period of his tour was limited to two, at which time his minority would be ended, and the anxiously-expected contract one way or other decided. Emily had thought of this, and the idea of getting for Arthur a respectable situation with De Courcy suggested itself, and which, with the extraordinary talents she discovered him to possess, would, undoubtedly, be the means of expanding them, and, more than probable, be the foundation of a better.—Yet, in opposition to this plan, the uncertainty

of what that station would be, gave her most sensible uneasiness.

As his companion, she feared he would be rejected: as his servant, she was convinced he himself would refuse; neither could she admit so degrading an idea, even though his birth was scarcely superior to one. Lord de Courcy's disposition, she knew, was inclined to favour merit, in whatever station he found it; but he was rather haughty; and however his Lordship might wish to serve Arthur in any other way, he might reject to setting him up as a companion for his son. The son, she was well aware of being an enthusiastic admirer of genius, and ever ready to step forward to assist it; and Emily was convinced that he would find a pleasure in countenancing this astonishing child of pure nature.—Lord de Courcy was very fond of her, she knew; and she believed her interest with his Lordship to be of no trifling consequence; and however unnoticed she had hitherto

hitherto observed it, she was equally certain of Anna's influence with the son. She was thus doubly armed, and at length decided in her mind to win over the two last, before she proceeded further.

That Emily was uncommonly interested for her new friend, is beyond a doubt, and that he deserved her good intentions, is equally certain; but it is also true, that she was more deeply engaged than she was aware of. Arthur was formed to prepossess every beholder in his favour; and when he spoke, every degrading sentiment which could attach to his birth, was forgot in the address of the gentleman. Had he been on an equality with Emily, her heart would have told her its faithful sentiments; but so much her inferior, she judged not its true feelings; and the natural generosity of her mind made her believe she acted solely from its impulses.

As she had appointed to meet Arthur the

following morning, there was no time to be lost in opening her communication. Lord de Courcy, after breakfast, set off to take a ride—his son to contemplate in the shades—and Anna to her chamber, to adjust her dress; whither Emily shortly after followed for the same purpose, but her friend had quitted it. She supposed her to have gone into the wood, and without any delay, followed there, where she also expected to find De Courcy, to both of whom she could have an opportunity of explaining herself. Nor was she disappointed—at the turn of a dark recess, over the bank of a gentle bubbling cascade, was one of those sequestered arbours, of which there were so many about the forest to rest the weary passenger, through the whole of its extensive windings, which as she suddenly entered, she perceived the objects of her search—Anna's sweetly-blushing face, half averted, and a starting tear visible in her mild blue eyes, as she seemed wishing to fly from the hand of the enraptured

tured De Courcy, who grasped one of hers, as, kneeling, he pressed it to his lips.

"What!" cried Emily, laughing, as she entered the arbour, "have *you* also made the discovery, De Courcy, and anticipated my homage to the descendant of royalty? —Pray what favour has been conferred, that you have the honour to kiss her hand?"

De Courcy rose, without being in the least confused.

"I have received none," replied he, still holding the hand of the agitated Anna; "I have only solicited a greater and a dearer one, than any Sovereign could bestow on me."

"And perhaps," said Emily, with an arch smile, "you have got a tacit promise of it, that you were so respectful in your acknowledgements."

"Dearest Emily," cried Anna, disengaging her hand from De Courcy's, and throw-

ing herself, in tears, on the neck of her friend, "ah, why, why suppose so? Do you not know I dare not?"

"I know no such thing," replied she.—"I only know you are a pair of sighing ——friends, that are up to the eyes in love with——I would not say each other for the world."

"What a wild rattle!" cried De Courcy. "Then since you have said so much, my dear Emily," he added, "I own my unalterable affection for your fair friend; and would, nay will, acknowledge them to the world."

"And in return for your confession," said she, with a playful humour, "I'll tell you, that my fair friend is not insensible to your tender affection; though, upon my honour, she has never told me so; only I have a little discernment, and a very little sagacity, by which I can judge something of it."

"Dearest Emily," cried Anna, raising her head, "what is it you are saying?"

"Contradict

"Contradict me," said she, laughingly, "and I submit to be called a fool all my life!—What, silent! the proof is against you, and I am dubbed a woman of sense."

"My Anna," said the delighted De Courcy to her, "am I at liberty to credit the words of your friend Emily?"

"I dare not reply to you," answered Anna. "Why should I?—I cannot, indeed, De Courcy. Oh, Emily," continued she, "you know the obstacles which prevent me saying all I could. Shall I dare to encourage hopes which must be disappointed? Tell him all, and then—then I think he will no longer solicit an answer."

"All!" he repeated. "What is it I'm to understand? by these words, what am I to learn?—Tell me, Emily. Anna, dearest Anna, surely, at your age, I have not to apprehend a favourite rival."

"You have none," cried Anna, eagerly; and, as if ashamed of the warmth of her manner, cast down her blushing looks, as she added, "I have never, till this moment,

received the declarations of any man; but there may be as strong objections against me listening any longer to yours."

De Courcy was alarmed, and his fears were now, that her whom he passionately adored beheld him with indifference.

"I shall importune you no further, Miss Jeffries," said he, with an agitated voice. "If I have no interest in your heart, the offer of mine must be injurious to your delicacy; and I would not offend the woman I love by an unkind perseverance, not even for the chance of obtaining her through it."

"Call me not Jeffries," said Anna, who was but too conscious of the interest he held in her bosom; "I have no right to it—if I had——"

"If you had, Anna," cried De Courcy, hastily.

"If I had," continued she, deeply blushing, "your attentions would be far from importunate.

importunate. But I am a child of charity, and have no claim on my benefactors, but what their kindness bestows: as such, De Courcy, I must reject the heart you offer me."

"Then," cried he, folding her in his arms, "it is yours for ever. If these are your only objections, my sweet Anna, they are none to me. I ask not to learn particulars; it is yourself I love; and be your name or your situation what it may, when De Courcy is his own master, his shall be yours, if you will accept of it."

"I am witness," cried Emily; "and as you have two years to consider of the matter, you need not be in a hurry to adjust it further at present; for as I am a third person, and therefore only a looker-on, you may decide the business at your next *tête-á-tête*—and give me leave to talk a little now of my own affairs."

Anna was very well pleased to be thus relieved from her embarrassment; and De

Courcy, as happy as a man could be, under the idea of not being disliked by his mistress, made no objection to Emily's proposal, as he considered any further discussion of the subject would, at present, be distressing to his beloved Anna, and not very entertaining to her lively friend.

"And now," said Emily, sitting down between them, "that you are a little rational, good folks, I must inform you of an adventure I met with this morning, when you two were, I suppose, in bed, dreaming of each other. And such a hero —an adventure, you know, would be nothing without one—and mine—your Alexanders and Cæsars were but a type of this son of——I can't say Mars, though he does belong to the field, but I believe he sprung from the brains of Minerva, for he seems something beyond the race of mere mortals."

"And where did you find this black swan?" asked De Courcy; "is it one of the

the visionary phantoms of the Castle, or a rural swain of the forest?"

"Whoever he is," replied Emily, "you must promise to comply, as much as is in your power, with the request I am about to make of you; it respects him, but it will oblige me."

De Courcy assured her of his willingness to serve any person for whom she was interested, and only begged to know in what manner. She, therefore, briefly related her meeting with Arthur, and represented him in such animated colours, that her friends became as anxious to see as she was to serve him—De Courcy in particular, who expressed himself much delighted with her account, and equally solicitous to befriend a youth possessing such uncommon natural acquirements; and, relying on her description, went so far as to say, that to make a companion of such a person would be doing himself honour; but to make a servant of him would be a satire on the

liberality of his sentiments, more disgraceful to him than degrading to Arthur.

Emily, having thus far succeeded in obtaining a warm friend for her new favourite, left the two gentle lovers to their own company, and returned to the Castle, at the entrance of which she was met by Lord de Courcy, who, passing her arm within his, asked her to take a stroll in the wood.

Emily's penetration was as quick as thought; she had, for some days before, marked the countenance of his Lordship, and observed on it a disquietude and vexation, whenever the looks of his son were directed to Anna; and knowing him to be of a haughty disposition, she dreaded, both on Anna and De Courcy's account, a discovery of their natural inclination, which she judged would be highly displeasing to Lord de Courcy, and involve the youthful heir in many unpleasant embarrassments. Besides, she considered as De Courcy

Courcy was going away for so long a period, he would, at his return, be his own master, and at liberty to make his election: But now, if his choice were known, his Lordship might lay him under some severe restrictions, which De Courcy either could not avoid complying with, or hazard his father's eternal displeasure. Anna's situation was so peculiarly delicate, that she would insist on her lover's obedience to his Lordship, and forfeit her own happiness, rather than risk that of a person who was dear to her.

Emily, therefore, took a contrary path to that she had just come, and was on the point of starting some trifling subject, when his Lordship suddenly asked her where was Henry and Miss Jeffries? The face of Emily glowed, as though she was guilty of some crime; but recollecting herself, immediately answered, with her accustomed vivacity, yet without derogating from the exact truth—for a falsehood

hood she ever avoided, unless where necessity might make it a virtue—

"I left Henry," said she; "a few minutes ago, studying his favourite Ovid: and Anna I saw some time before, deeply engaged perusing Petrarch."

"Then," thought his Lordship, not comprehending her meaning, "as they are at different studies, they are not together."—He was silent a few minutes.

"Have you any idea, Emily," said he, seriously, "that Henry loves Anna?"

"My Lord!" cried she, with a look of surprise, and not knowing whether to be pleased or vexed at this hasty demand. "I believe," she continued, "Anna is a favourite of every person of discernment. If your Lordship means the question in general terms, I answer, that De Courcy must be as sensible of her merit as any other individual who has the happiness of her acquaintance; if you mean it as a particular one, I am not qualified to be a spy on

her

her conduct, who could better regulate mine; and I know too well what is due to female propriety, to watch the actions of any man."

"My dear Emily," cried Lord de Courcy, "I meant not to offend you; if I have, pardon me. I acknowledge your friend to be both amiable and deserving, so much so, indeed, that it would more grieve than surprise me, were my suspicions true."

"And in my turn, my Lord," said Emily, "let me ask you, why (if they were justly founded) would you object to your son's making choice of an object who would do honour to his judgment?"

"Because," replied his Lordship, "there is another I would prefer." He looked stedfastly at her as he spoke, and she could not mistake the person he meant. He, however, left it beyond her power, by continuing—"To see you the wife of my son, would be the greatest happiness I could wish, for I am convinced you are capable of forming his. And as, by the course of

nature, Henry must, in a short period, fill my situation and rank, I think I should resign it with satisfaction, knowing you to be the future Lady de Courcy."

Lord de Courcy could not express himself more explicitly. It was, indeed, telling her his wishes, without betraying their original motive.

"Your approbation, my Lord," replied Emily, "I am vain of; and your favourable wishes for my exaltation does me the highest honour. But hear my sentiments, Lord de Courcy," continued she, "and believe them to be my true ones. Were my heart favourably disposed to a man, whom parental authority alone might compel to offer me his hand, at the same time that I was indifferent to him, I would sacrifice every feeling of it, rather than clog his happiness through life with an object he disregarded. Nor should the most arbitrary power force me to accept a rank, however noble, where I could not love, honour,

honour, and obey, with my whole soul.—The coronet I should probably wear, would then sit uneasy on my head; which, to get rid of, I might be induced to add guilt to hypocrisy, and return it to its master with a disgraceful appendage. I shall, therefore, studiously avoid both evils; and if ever I do become a grave settled wife, a mutual affection shall lead me to the altar with the man of my heart. And," added she, with vivacity, "whatever his rank may be, we will jog on through life, like good Baucis and Philemon; when, if perchance near this Castle, or any other place of *immortal* fame, some heavenly wanderer should sojourn at our habitation, like their benign visitant, he might reward our lasting attachment, and sprout us up a couple of yew-trees in the church-yard, as examples of love and conjugal affection."

Lord de Courcy did not much relish this speech of Emily's, neither did he well understand part of it; for as he was a man of the nicest sentiments of honour, in every respect,

respect, but most tenaciously so in regard to the married state, he could hardly think she, who was as scrupulous in other matters, attached any serious impropriety to her words, let alone to meditate acting so, from any cause whatever. She had, however, a little alarmed him; her expressions displayed a daring spirit, and he found by them, that the only chance of succeeding in his hopes was to suffer matters to take their own way. His Lordship, however, did not perceive the depth of Emily's meaning; her words and her thoughts were wholly distinct from each other; but his, being so fully comprehensive, she neither wished to encourage or destroy the wishes he expressed, for reasons, in which her friends bore the principal share.

By keeping his Lordship in suspense, any suspicions he might form of Anna and Henry, would be silenced in his doubts; and as Emily was very firmly persuaded in her own mind of never receiving the name of De Courcy, though she knew not how far

far her parents might be inclined to favour it, yet this declaration of her sentiments would, she believed, prevent every attempt of either party to bias her inclinations, and very possibly prove the means of reconciling Lord De Courcy, at a future period, to those of his son.

From this time, Emily became as a guardian watch over the two lovers, while they remained at the Castle; she did not presume mentioning to them a sentence of her conversation with Lord de Courcy; for she well knew that the innate delicacy of Anna's soul would have taken alarm, and the proud spirit of Henry would fire at being controlled; but she regulated her attentions so judiciously, that while she contrived to be oftener seen in the society of Anna and De Courcy, she lulled the rising suspicions of his Lordship, without appearing, or even, indeed, wishing, to obtrude on the private conversations of this enraptured pair.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

"As sweets combin'd with sours, will oft produce
The richest medicine for general use;
So joys and griefs in mingled tides may flow,
To give a zest to virtuous deeds below."

THE youthful and aspiring Arthur spent the intervening hours of his meeting with his lovely friend, in a state of mind which excluded every thought, but wherewith she was attached. Of the plan she had hastily mentioned, he could form no idea; but to whatever it was, he determined on agreeing. The life he led was irksome and hateful

hateful to him; his soul soared above his station; nor could the duty he felt conscious a child owed to a parent, reconcile him to an implicit obedience of his mother's will.

He was the unfortunate son of Catherine, who had nursed the male heir of Villeroy, and through whose means the fatal disorder had been communicated to the twin children, from which he himself had escaped, without even any visible marks of its tremendous ravages, so fatal often to the otherwise lovely face. From childhood, this superior intelligence and lofty spirit had been visible; his soul disdained the drudgery of a menial; the labour of the peasant he would voluntarily partake in, but against compulsion it revolted; and the society of his equals he eagerly shunned. Indeed, except the working *peasants* round the place, there were no other associates; and these, though Arthur respected them in their station, as the industrious labourers who

who tilled the earth, for the produce of man's sustenance, he could not bend himself to make companions of.

Arthur had been sent by his mother to the little school of the neighbouring village, where he learned his letters; and before he was very long there, his facility and quickness not alone brought him through the Primer and Reading made Easy, but left all the other boys behind, and very soon outdid the master himself.

His writing was shewed as a pattern in the school, and his pieces stuck up in a brown frame, for the exhibition of little Arthur's uncommon talents. But having gone through all the studies this village seminary afforded, he had nothing further to learn there, and was therefore taken from it, to assist his mother in the more laborious task of weeding the garden, pruning the trees, driving the cow to and from pasture,

pasture, or taking care of the few domestic animals belonging to the cottage.—These employments pleased, for a while, his boyish fancy; but it did not last long; he grew careless of them; and though his mother sometimes scolded, she never otherwise corrected him for his negligence. He was more attached to his grandmother than to her, for she was very fond of him, and allowed him to ramble about the Castle as he pleased. Here it was that he one time discovered a few books, which he read through with avidity and delight, keeping in his mind the most remarkable passages; when Margarette, seeing him so pleased with them, gave him the key of Lord Fitzwalter's small library, to amuse himself in his favourite pursuit, on a more extensive scale: And here Arthur devoted almost the whole of his time, not alone reading the best English authors, but, with the aid of the different Dictionaries he found there, acquired a trifling knowledge of French,

Latin,

Latin, and Italian; but, being self-taught, he could not pronounce the language of either with any degree of precision. He made a manuscript of his own notes, and any particular subject which struck him; and by this means he not only wrote a free and elegant hand, but his style improved as his ideas expanded.

The library, where Arthur spent so many hours, was adjoining those rooms which Margarette objected to having opened, and in his researches through it, he happened to discover at one time that its key opened a door near it: this, although unknown to him, was the sleeping chamber of Lady Fitzwalter, and that one where the unhappy Mrs. Villeroy brought into the world the two little orphans, and where she died. It also communicated with her studying-closet, from which there was an opening to the south tower.

This bed-room was conjectured, by the weak-

weak-minded Margarette, to be the principal resort of the ghostly wanderers; and whether it was that Arthur found it more agreeable for his studies, or having a desire to satisfy himself respecting those rumours, of which he wanted proofs to convince him, but without saying any thing to his grandmother of his discovery, he removed thither his papers and books, as he wanted them, making it his favourite resort, and where he found himself happier than in any other place. Having learned the way of entering these rooms, without passing through the front hall of the building, he had frequently given up his dear employment, of a day, to attend a little to his mother's domestic concerns; when at night, stealing out by the little cottage window of his sleeping-room, when she has believed him soundly reposing, has he passed the gloomy recesses of the forest, through the decayed arch, and up the spiral steps, discovered by Emily, to his beloved room, where, unknown to the old guardians of

the Castle, he has spent the hours till daylight, improving his mind, and cultivating his understanding. It happened that these apartments were immediately over those occupied by Margarette and Robert; of which Arthur not being strictly aware, he was less cautious in his observance of quiet. If, by chance, he dropped a book, moved a chair, or, as he frequently did, traverse the rooms, either to exercise his limbs, or in search of some new study, the dead silence of night echoed every step along the lofty walls, and was often the occasion of the old woman's terrors; but as she never had courage to seek into the real cause, and Robert heeded them not, Arthur possessed his situation in tranquillity, fearless of the nightly visitants said to wander there, and undisturbed by any thing but his own reflections, which were not always pleasant, from the ambition that towered his manly spirit beyond his humble state, and which the details he read of noble deeds and heroes, fired with renovated ardour.

The

The morning arrived, that was to open to his aspiring mind the prospect of gratifying his wishes. Hope flitted in a thousand airy forms round his senses: it sent him into the world, though fortuneless, befriended, and represented to his ardent imagination as rising from the groveling situation he was placed in, and soaring with honour, or dying with applause.

He paced the walks of the forest with restlessness and impatience. The sun had been some time above the eastern hills; and though Arthur did not dare admit a thought disadvantageous to his lovely friend, he found, by its progress, she had passed the hour of appointment. His thoughts became confused and perplexed; he feared she might be ill, from her preceding morning's accident, and then apprehensions for her subdued every idea of himself. But soon were those alarms hushed; the Castle gate opened, and he beheld his dear, angelic friend approach, leaning on

the arm of a gentleman, whose other assisted a fairer, yet not more lovely, female.

Arthur's heart beat tremblingly for a few moments; but it soon recovered its nobler feelings, and advancing to the trio, he paid his obedience with equal dignity as respect.

Emily introduced him to De Courcy, who, already prepossessed in his favour, and no less pleased with his noble appearance, extended his hand with a generous warmth, as he assured him he came as his friend.

"This affability," said Arthur, with an animated expression of countenance, "from a person of your superior rank, to one so humble as me, claims my gratitude. Had you met me, Sir, with the coldness, (I might say haughtiness), which the great too often assume to their inferiors, I should have thanked you for your offer of friendship,

ship, at the same time that I would have declined it. But the kindness of your advances ennobles you, and submits me, henceforth, to your commands."

De Courcy was enraptured with the youth, and on conversing with him, discovered him possessed of a mind astonishingly cultivated, and a soul endued with every great virtue, which only wanted the advantages of the world's intercourse, to present him to it as one of its brightest ornaments; and this he resolved he should have, by every exertion in his power to serve him.

Whatever Anna's sentiments had hitherto been for De Courcy, she no sooner fixed her eyes on this engaging youth, than a feeling, before unknown to her, took possession of every faculty: her limbs trembled, her heart beat, almost to agony; the tears, unconsciously, streamed

down her cheek, as the crimson current forsaking it, she dropped, nearly fainting, in his arms, which were extended to receive her, as he perceived her colour suddenly retire.

Oh! Anna, wert thou fickle and inconstant? or had thy gentle heart mistaken the dictates of friendship, as the more tender sentiments of affection, which wanted this meeting to prove to thee thy error?—Certain it was, that while she reposed her languid head on the shoulder of Arthur, she experienced a sensation of such perfect happiness, that every other object faded from her view and; in his sheltering arms she believed she could resign the whole world, or even life itself, with pleasure. The natural delicacy of her mind, which had often restrained the ardent embraces of her tender and adoring lover, admitted no impropriety to it, as she thus reclined on the bosom of a stranger; on the contrary, she could have clasped him

to

to hers, and holding him there, proudly acknowledge the influence he held in it.

She again raised her drooping head, and again her eyes encountered the looks of Arthur fixed on hers, with so sweet an expression, that it shot to her inmost soul; she once more rested for a few moments on his shoulder, when suddenly casting her looks towards De Courcy, she perceived his countenance violently agitated, and she instantly lifted her head—

"I am ill," said she, putting her hand to it: "I believe I have risen earlier than my general hour; that and the sun has overcome me. I'll withdraw to the Castle, and repose myself till breakfast-time."

She cast a look at Arthur, and bursting into tears, fled with precipitancy from the place; and for some moments after she had disappeared, an universal consternation seemed to pervade the whole remaining party.

De Courcy was, indeed, astonished, and at first dismayed; but no sooner had Anna retired, than he felt his momentary uneasiness dispel; and the gentle virtues, which had compleated her conquest over him, rose to repel the busy demon's discordant attacks, and returned her to his heart as worthy as before. She might have been ill; the sun was powerful (though it had very little power over those shady walks); and he had suffered himself to be agitated by a mere coincidence of chances. Had not Arthur, who stood nearest her, supported her trembling form, he would have despised him as an unfeeling, insensible wretch, unworthy the attentions of a man, if he could refuse his assistance to a woman; and the only uneasiness De Courcy now experienced, arose from the recollection of his unkind pique having prevented the tender attention her indisposition demanded he should have paid her.

This interview with Arthur established to him

him a generous friend; and De Courcy, without being informed of Emily's intention, instantly started the idea she had before thought of, namely, his accompanying him on his travels; by which he believed he would not only find an agreeable companion, but, with the genius the youth himself possessed, it would be an opportunity of serving him infinitely beyond any thing that could be done for him in another situation. The pride of Lord de Courcy, he believed, might be some obstacle to his making a companion of a peasant, and his Lordship would, perhaps, oppose that idea; yet to take him in any other situation was what De Courcy would feel as an insult to his own judgment, equally offered to a person who, excepting birth, was every way his superior. As his Lordship was, however, a liberal patronizer of merit, the extraordinary abilities Arthur displayed, his commanding presence and gentlemanly deportment, could not fail of interesting him; and as the obscurity of his birth could hardly be traced,

from his very retired and remote life, it was not improbable but his Lordship might be inclined to overlook that trifling objection, at the desire of his son, no less than for the honour of patronizing so promising a youth.

De Courcy therefore took an opportunity of presenting Arthur to his Lordship, without immediately informing him who he was, by whom he was most graciously received. Lord de Courcy was, indeed, delighted with his appearance; the amiable qualities he displayed, so rare to be met with at his age, (for Arthur was not eighteen) highly pleased him, and the beautiful open countenance he shewed, attracted his notice with peculiar energy. His Lordship supposed him to be the son of some neighbouring gentleman; and Henry, perceiving his father's partiality to him, without further hesitation related the truth, and as freely declared his own wishes; which he did in the presence of Emily,

that

that her interest might be also added to his request. But how delighted and gratified was De Courcy, at finding that the engaging youth had, of himself, found a strong one, which required no other assistance to conciliate the favour of Lord de Courcy, who said—

"You have my full permission, Henry, to act towards your young friend as you think most advantageous for him. You found him out, and you shall have the merit of bringing him into the world. I like to encourage a well-meaning mind, and to promote an aspiring one: there is something about that youth, which attracts me to him, and I feel as if he was entitled to my esteem. Were he deficient in point of merit," continued his Lordship, "I should very possibly object to his being on a familiar intercourse with you, as I am no advocate for equality—every man in his station; but if he can raise it by honourable means, he is to be commended. The

laws of well regulated nations make princes and subjects; and were every person on an equality, anarchy and confusion would overcome peace and prosperity. The prince would be a labourer; the labourer would strut as proud as the prince. No man would work, believing himself above it. The ground would be untilled; the country a garden of weeds, instead of nutriment: masters must be servants, and servants would be masters. Commerce must cease, for the markets would be deserted; and, ere long, poverty and starvation would wind up the climax of those unhappy persons, whose ambition, or ignorance, would lead them to subvert a nation's laws and happiness. But this young man," added he, "is an exception; he aspires to no other fortune than what he can honourably acquire, and his genius soars above a common one. If I have any foresight, he will one day or other make a shining figure in the world; and I shall be happy to advance him in any way within

my

my power. Therefore, Henry, I again repeat, you have my permission to act as you please in this business; only, urge not the youth to any situation disagreeable to his inclinations: if it is his own wish to accompany you, it will be my care to obviate any pecuniary difficulty, for a person who goes with my son to a distant country, and must, consequently, be led into great expences. If, on the contrary, he prefers remaining at home, I will use my best endeavours to procure for him a situation more agreeable to his wishes."

"My dear Sir," cried Henry, "you have conferred on me *one* of the greatest favours in the world, and for which I am grateful. But I believe I can answer, from what I know of Arthur, that he will accept of my offer, in preference to every other."

"That will be soon known," replied his Lordship: "and in that case, as we are shortly to quit this place, I'll send him on to my house in London, before we go. I do not intend stopping many hours at Deventon,

Deventon, after I resign my young charge there; and you must hasten to Cambridge, from whence, as soon as your business there is arranged, you and Doctor Barclay can join me in the metropolis, and where I shall have matters adjusted ready for your immediate departure."

"But, my dear Sir," said Henry, "why send on Arthur before us?—Might he not come to Deventon?"

"I have some reasons for not taking him there," replied Lord de Courcy; "and the only request I have to make of you in this affair, is, your being satisfied with my arrangement. I pledge you my honour as to the rest, and that your young friend shall be prepared to meet you in London, as he deserves to be, and as the companion of my son should appear—a gentleman."

Henry bowed to his father's desire, but he thought he perceived a lurking pride beneath his words, which made him desirous of concealing Arthur from the inspection

tion of his friends, till such time as his outward appearance had been modelled more suitable to his internal perfections, when De Courcy imagined his Lordship would represent him, in the light he had at first taken him, the son of some respectable country gentleman, who intended making the same tour. In the latter case, Henry judged most truly, but in the former, he did not strict justice to his father's sentiments, which were actuated by very different motives, but which were only known to himself.

Emily, on returning to the Castle, hastened to visit her friend, as not finding her in the breakfast-parlour, she concluded her to be really indisposed. Anna had thrown herself on the bed, and on Emily's entering, instead of replying to the question she tenderly made of her health, she hastily demanded—

"Has De Courcy promised to be a friend

to Arthur?—Has he said he will protect him?—Oh! Emily, tell me he has, or I shall be wretched!"

"Really," replied Emily; "you appear more tremblingly alive to this young man's welfare than any of us. And think you that De Courcy could withhold his friendship from a person who, it is not clear to me, carries a spell about him, by which he attracts his beholders?"

"I know not what he carries," answered Anna, sighing profoundly; "but be it what it may, he has charmed me."

"Indeed!" said Emily, blushing to the deepest crimson, and looking rather confused, which the other, however, did not notice.

"Indeed he has," replied she. "I think I could lay down my life to serve him; and had not De Courcy promised, Oh! with what pleasure would I have presented him to *my* friends, and shared with him—nay transferred to him, the whole of their affections, without a murmur."

"A frank

"A frank avowal," thought Emily, but she did not let it pass her lips. She felt an uneasy sensation at her bosom, the nature of which she knew not rightly: she was too generous to be mistrustful, and too little sensible of her own feelings, to harbour it as a jealous idea, though it was not very distant from either; but it passed over in a minute, and her good humour and good nature resumed their wonted ascendancy.

As Arthur was now a frequent visitor at the Castle, he, every succeeding interview, gained ground with his friends; and as he modestly related to Lord de Courcy how he had become his own instructor, he gave to old Margarette the merit of having afforded him the means, and to himself the humbler one of having pursued his studies, as a relaxation from the dull and insipid life he led. He did not say his whole soul was absorbed in them, that his bright genius studied with avidity, and comprehended

hended with facility; and that to pursue his favourite avocations, he would have shut himself up from the liveliest intercourse the world could have afforded.

Arthur was too nobly-minded to be a pedant; he knew, perhaps, he was superiorly gifted to the class of people around him; but he was conscious, if Heaven had not bestowed on him those favours, he could not have acquired them of himself alone; and his heart was now thankful for the blessings given him, and the diligence with which he had pursued them, since it was the means of raising him noble friends, and releasing him from a station that, as he encreased in age, grew every hour more painful to him.

To the proposal of Henry, he joyfully acquiesced; but his expressions of thanks were neither insipidly mean, or unbecomingly exulting; he felt himself obliged, and he acknowledged it, with grace and modesty.

modesty. There was yet, however, a barrier to surmount, in the permission of his mother, who, though he certainly, with all his goodness, did not violently love, he was conscious of deserving the respect due to one, by informing her of his happy fortune, and to which he had an idea she would most vehemently oppose; but on telling this circumstance to his friends, Lord de Courcy very bluntly said—"Pshaw, nonsense; if the woman's a fool, let her remain so. I'll go and talk to her, and should she be weak enough to demur at your embracing the opportunity of making your own fortune and hers, damn me if I would not pack you off, without further ceremony, in the next mail coach, and let her take the law of me afterwards, if she had a mind."

Lord de Courcy was as good as his word, and with Henry he walked over to her cottage, or, as it had formerly been known, the Wood-house. Here he found the mother

ther of Arthur sitting at her wheel, who no sooner spied them, than she recognised them as some of the gentry visiting at the Castle; and, with rather an embarrassed air, she rose to meet them, dropping a respectful curtsey. She was a tall, thin, middle-aged woman, very pale, and at present more so than usual: there was a strong mark of melancholy on her countenance, but her appearance altogether was respectful.

"Sit down, my good woman," said Lord de Courcy kindly to her. "Sit down near me; I am come to have a little conversation with you about this fine lad of yours—(Arthur was not present)—your son Arthur."

"Sir!" faltered out the woman, with her face deepening to scarlet—"Arthur!"

"Yes," replied his Lordship; "you have no other son or child, I understand.—So listen to me attentively."

Catherine,

Catherine, indeed, had no power to do otherwise; for she seemed almost confounded at the unexpected visit of those great folks, and the hasty mention of her son, whom she certainly loved dearly—and his Lordship went on in his discourse without interruption, dwelling, with particular force, on the advantages afforded Arthur, and delicately expressing his and Henry's good intentions towards him.

"Oh, my Lord!" said she, when he had done, "I cannot, indeed I cannot part with Arthur. I am thankful to you both for your kindness, but he must not——" She burst into tears, and could proceed no further.

His Lordship was moved at the poor woman's tears, but he would not give up his point: he argued, persuaded, and used every rhetoric he was master of, to get her to comply by gentle means; but all would not do—she still declared, she could not let

let him go from her; till Lord de Courcy at last got into a passion at her obstinacy, and looking at her very sternly for a few moments—"Then, as you will not let him come with me freely, and of your own consent—I have got his—I'll make free enough to tell you that I shall take him without it," said his Lordship, "and it wont require much trouble to get him from you. And take care," added he, with a severe shake of his head, "take care how you make me your enemy; I have a strong suspicion that, at the winding up of the thread, you'll have damnably the worst end of it."

Catherine was struck speechless for a few minutes; she trembled violently; her colour came and retreated in quick flashes; and she seemed nearly fainting.

"Am I to go?" cried Lord de Courcy, without relaxing his stern brow; "am I to go without your voluntary consent to my

taking Arthur? Remember, I don't deceive you, I'll take him without it; and, should any circumstance bring us together again, (and I think it probable there may, in the course of three or four years, if we both live so long) your opposition now will forfeit you the favour of a person who might, perhaps, befriend you then."

"Take him," cried Catherine, scarcely having power to falter out the words, "take my child, and take care of him; but, Oh! do not let him be——" Whatever she was going to add died on her lips, and she again burst into an agony of tears.

"Now," said Lord de Courcy, "I thank you, and I promise you I'll take care of him; and further I promise you too, that should you hereafter stand in want of protection yourself, I'll give it to you. Arthur must leave you in a day or two," continued he; "so muster up your fortitude, to part with him like a good mother, that has the welfare of her child at heart. And here—here are twenty guineas for you; as I rob you of a good

good support one way, I must make it up some other. But don't go to any expence whatever for your son, or give him any of the money—or any other: that's my business to look to—so good morning to you; and mind what I've said—and *all* I have said."

Lord de Courcy walked away with Henry as he concluded his determined point, and left Catherine in a state of mind, which all the great advantages presented for her son could not tranquillize. Whether it was parting from her only child for the first time, and with the dread of its being for ever, or that Lord de Courcy's violence had terrified her—who but herself could tell? She was, however, left so wretched, that even the presence of Arthur, or his kind attentions to her, which he particularly directed at this time, could not restore peace to her mind, or dry up the tears she unceasingly shed. Had not Arthur been firm in his resolution, her distress might have worked him from his

his purpose; but he considered that a little time would abate her grief, and the present opportunity could never be recalled—when, if he was fortunate enough to succeed, the happiness she would then feel would compensate for the trouble she now experienced at his departure.

The commission that Anna had received from Lady Fitzwalter, she had not disclosed to any person; and, as they were so soon to quit the Castle, she thought it time to execute it. There was not, certainly, any thing annexed to it which required concealment; but, as her Ladyship had entrusted it to her in private, she did not consider herself authorised to communicate it further—and, even to Emily, she observed a silence on the subject. It was, however, necessary to get Margarette's permission for entering the chamber, and this she asked of her in secrecy, producing the little key as her authority for demanding it.

"Lord have mercy on us, Miss!" cried she, looking at Anna with astonishment, "why, sure you would not go there by yourself? and I would not venture in it for all the whole world."

"Oh!" cried Anna, "I must go; there are some things belonging to her Ladyship in the cabinet, which I promised to bring her—therefore, in the pursuit of my commission, I shall not be deterred."

"But," said Margarette, with quickness, "what will the rest of the gentlefolks say at my *remitting* you there, Miss, and not letting them go in the other day?"

Anna was pleased that the old woman had started this question, for she did not like the idea of prohibiting her mentioning it, nor did she wish it to be known.

"Then," said Anna to her, "as there is no occasion to say any thing of it, I shall be silent about it, and so may you, if you please."

"That

"That I shall, Miss," replied Margarette; "I am no talker, nor no blabber—so here's the key of the room for you, and the little *windan* cabinet is close up in a corner of the closet, as you go in, on your left hand. But don't stop in the room that the bed is in, Miss—Lord have mercy on us! to be sure you have the courage of a thousand people, to go there all alone."

Anna took the key: she put it into her pocket, intending to go there the first opportunity in the day; but none offered, and she thought, if the next was as unlucky, she would have no time for executing her intention—and, therefore, determined on going at night, after Emily had retired, which, now they were both become familiar to the Castle, they found no reluctance to pass through by themselves, at all hours, and withdrew whenever their inclination directed them.

After supper, Anna took up a book, with

which she pretended to be deeply engaged; and, as she had conjectured, Emily seeing her so intent on reading, called for her chamber light, and retired, leaving her with the two gentlemen, who were playing piquet, who, by the time she thought her in bed, rung for her's and withdrew. Her heart beat a little tremulously as she drew near the door; and, before she put the key in the lock, she almost resolved to defer her purpose till the morrow; but she felt ashamed of her pusillanimity, so unlike what Emily would shew on a similar occasion, she was sure—and without further deliberation, unlocked the door, and entering, gently closed it after her.

The apartment Anna found herself in, was the small library before spoken of, where Arthur had so often recourse to; and as she held up her light, it prevented her distinctly seeing the glimmer which came from the opposite door, then half open; it appeared like the reflection of her own,

and

and she drew near, it being that she was to pass through to the bed-chamber and closet. She threw open the door, but she was no longer able to continue her pursuit. All the terrific stories of this haunted Castle seemed realized, as she fixed her eyes on a figure attentively looking over some papers, which were scattered before it. A faint scream passed her lips, as terror subdued her imagination, and dropping the light she held, sunk senseless on the floor.

No visionary substance raised the affrighted Anna; but the sweet voice of Arthur, breathing on her returning senses, restored her to them and animation. It was Arthur himself, who, pursuing his nightly studies, had, for the first time, been alarmed in his turn; and, flying to learn the cause of it, caught the affrighted girl in his arms as she was sinking. He brought her to the window, which he opened—poured water on her pale face, and rubbed her hands, till perceiving life return, he

spoke to her in the softest accents, and the sound of his voice restored her once more to herself.

"Arthur!" said she, raising her head, "is it you who has thus alarmed me? you——But I am weak and timid, else you had been far from terrifying me."

Arthur told her the reasons why she met him there at such an unseasonable hour, adding—"As this may probably be my last visit to this beloved spot, I was anxious to arrange some papers, ere I quitted it, perhaps for ever."

Anna looked round: she was in a bedroom, alone, with a stranger, unknown to any of the inhabitants of the Castle, and at the hour of midnight; yet Anna, the gentle, delicate, modest Anna, felt no uneasy sensations, no disagreeable alarms, or unpleasant thoughts. She sat by the side of Arthur, and this room, so beloved by him, appeared to her an earthly Paradise.

"Oh!"

"Oh!" cried she, "what charm is there in this apartment that strikes my heart with such sweet emotions? Every object in it appears to possess a power over me—I breathe here as a new-created being—and it seems as if I only now existed for the first time."

"This chamber," said Arthur, "was the sleeping-room of the present Lady Fitzwalter."

"Ah!" cried Anna, "I no longer wonder that I feel in it a secret pleasure: every thing which relates to her attaches me by an invisible enchantment: There is a fascination about her which is indescribable; She must be seen, to feel it. Ah, did you but know her, Arthur!"

"I have heard of her often," replied he, "and without having ever seen, I respect, indeed, I believe, love her. Ah, Madam!" he continued, with a heavy sigh, "I would not wish to meet Lady Fitzwalter; it was through me she met the last blow to her happiness. You have heard, I presume,

Miss Jeffries, of her brother, the late Mr. Villeroy?"

"I have," replied she; "and how often have I wept over the untimely fate of his offspring!"

"And that fate," said he, with his hand half upraised, as he dropt it again with peculiar expression, "that fate I was the means of hastening; through me the twin heirs of Villeroy met their death—Oh! how often has my mother and my grandmother told it to me! I remember frequently, when I was a boy, the former taking me on her knee, and wetting my face with her tears, as she lamented in me the fatal destiny of Villeroy's children. Think you," he added, "I could meet the amiable woman, whose peace, whose happiness I destroyed, whose life I made wretched, however innocently? Oh, no! I dare not; I would shun Lady Fitzwalter's sight, as the first murderer shunned the light of day."

"Ah!" cried Anna, "Lady Fitzwalter is too just to accuse any person of an involuntary

voluntary crime, let alone condemn in the man the misfortune the infant was decreed to produce: and, on the contrary, I am of opinion, that, were she to see you, she would feel all your worth, and strive to emulate your present friends in the advancement of your fortunes."

"You are not the only person, Madam," said Arthur, "who panegyrises the virtues of her Ladyship; I have heard them dwelt on by many of the aged pensioners of her bounty, who once lived in comfort round the Castle's demesne. Alas! she who so well deserves to be happy is most wretched—and her Lord, if report speaks true, is deficient in many of her admirable qualities."

"It does, I fear," replied Anna; "and Lord Fitzwalter is not only unjust, but also ungenerous. Since the death of those children, by whom he acquired such a splendid addition to his own large fortune, he shuns the society of this lovely and amiable woman; his conduct tells the world, that, having got all he could expect,

indeed, I believe, all he ever looked forward to, he had no longer any appearances to keep up—and, possessed of the golden prize, he openly evinced his contempt for all its former owners. Had Mr. Villeroy lived," continued Anna, "the dear, the ever-lamented brother of Lady Fitzwalter, whose name, and whose virtues, my heart reveres, she had not been neglected—had not been despised by her husband. Oh, Arthur! I have heard her speak of that brother in such endearing strains—dwell on the gentleness of his heart, and the nobleness of his soul, till mine, receiving the deep impression of her's, every pulsation of it has throbbed to agony at the name of Villeroy."

"Here," said Arthur, "here also it may imbibe another tender sentiment for that respected name; for here, in this chamber, in this bed, the wife of Villeroy gave birth to the twin heirs, and—resigned her breath!"

"*Here!*"

"*Here!*" cried Anna, clasping her hands with solemnity, "was it here Mrs. Villeroy died? Oh, Arthur! it has received another tender impression, indeed! Great God! why should I feel my heart so deeply, so solemnly affected? yet your words—"this apartment," and—yourself, Arthur, give to my soul such a sweet, though melancholy, sensation, that it seemed as if a secret inspiration told me, these feelings, and those objects, were the boundaries of all my earthly desires."

Anna threw herself on the shoulder of Arthur—the tears streamed in torrents down her cheeks—they wetted his bosom; nor was he less affected, though not effeminately so. The lovely, innocent girl, who thus leaned on him, who so tenderly expressed the sentiments she felt, appeared to him like a sacred deposit from Heaven; and not the first pair in Paradise, before the wily serpent introduced sin to man, were more

pure or innocent in their hearts, than Arthur and Anna.

"Dear, amiable, gentle girl," said Arthur, as he threw one arm round her waist, "the man who would not respect your feelings, would be undeserving the name of one, and unworthy of man's society: mine beat awfully conscious of the virtue which surrounds you like a glory—and a secret monitor whispers to my soul, that, to shelter you from the world's dangers, I would shed the last drop of my heart's best current."

Anna raised her mild blue eyes to his.—"Who are you," said she plaintively, "that thus irresistibly binds me to you? It is not the general acceptation of the word love, which draws my heart to you: no, Heaven forbid! for then would I be a wretch undeserving of pity, or of notice; but a secret impulse attaches my very soul, and, from the first moment I beheld you, established

established you a power there to which even love itself gives place. Oh, what a destiny is mine!" continued she, addressing Heaven with upraised hands and looks—"Oh, God of the world! can Arthur be ought to me? Is he entwined in it? You behold before you a being without a name—deserted by my parents—forsaken by all relative connexions—cast on the bounty of strangers, yet dreading the moment that may tear me from them, by the claims of an unknown mother, who, abandoning me in my infancy, may hereafter expose the meanness of my origin by demanding me as her child."—The tears of Anna redoubled as she felt the possibility of such an event taking place, and a sentiment of honourable pride chilled her bosom, at the idea of that mother bringing disgrace on her, more through her conduct than her poverty.

Arthur sympathised in her fears, while he tenderly sought to sooth them. The meanness of each other's origin was a source

source of equal unhappiness to both; and while they lamented it as inevitable, they could not bend their stubborn minds to bear the ordination with fortitude.

Anna at length recollecting the business that brought her to this chamber, informed Arthur of it, by mentioning a commission of Lady Fitzwalter's, without saying what. He pointed to the closet door standing open, which, taking up a light, she entered by herself, and in the further corner of it stood the little Indian cabinet. She easily found the secret drawer, and in it the letters spoken of by her Ladyship, all of which she took from thence; and, closing the drawer with some force, her hand struck against a connected spring, and the lower front falling like a desk, she perceived another bundle of papers rolled and tied up—"These," thought Anna, "must also belong to Lady Fitzwalter, and the length of time has erased them from her memory; they may be of use to her, and I will also take them

them with the others."—She did so, when bringing them together to the room where Arthur still remained, folded them up in one large wrapper, without attempting to look at any one of them; and the hand of Arthur sealed the cover, and addressed it to Lady Fitzwalter.

Anna was going to retire, when the dear friend her heart had so invincibly chosen arrested her steps by taking her hand, while his face glowing with a flush of anxiety, he entreated her attention yet longer.—"I think," said he, "I could entrust to your keeping every secret of my soul. I am going to ask you a question, which may tell you, that, however humble my birth, my heart has dared to select a superior object to fill its tenderest wishes. Does Mr. De Courcy love your charming friend?"

The sweet face of Anna would have been a sufficient reply to his demand, as it blushed a confirmation of the real object—her eyes

bent to the floor—and her lips softly pronounced—" No."

Arthur read the truth on her expressive countenance.

" Noble De Courcy," cried he, " the choice you have made is worthy of you; may your happiness be equal to your virtues—and perish the wretch who would dare to sever you, if such should be found."

" If it will give you any satisfaction to know it, Arthur," said Anna, " I hesitate not to tell you, that Emily Grenville has no attachment but in her friendships: the loveliness of her person, and the more lovely graces of her mind, give her an admirer in almost every man who sees her; but, I can answer for it, she has not yet seen him to whom she would give her invaluable heart—unless, indeed——"

" Unless what?" cried Arthur, earnestly repeating the words—" Unless what?"

Anna was going to add—" It has been

been very lately," but she recollected it would be betraying her suspicions of his being a particular favourite of Emily's, without her absolutely knowing whether they were justly founded—or even though they were, it would be a breach of honour. She, therefore, checked her words in time, and said in their stead—"Unless, indeed, it is unknown to me, which I am almost positive is not the case."

Arthur sighed.—"Yet it is doubtful," he cried: "but why should I seek to know it, a poor, humble, unknown youth, who is thrown on the mercy of strangers, to seek his fortune in a world he is unacquainted with? Did Miss Grenville suspect my presumption, she would spurn me with contempt—contempt!" he repeated: "no, I may be—I am contemptibly born, and my proud soul feels the only ignominy which shall ever attach to me. The man who dares despise me for it, will know me to be his equal—I will either rise to him, or he shall fall to me; but the woman whose esteem

esteem I would preserve, shall not, if I can command myself, have to contemn me by an avowal of my weakness, or, what she might suppose, arrogance. Yet," he added, "how strangely formed is the human heart! I would again solicit a favour, Miss Jeffries——"

"Call me Anna," she cried, taking his hand; "though all the world know me by the name of Jeffries, to you let me be Anna, and by that appellation only will I reply to your demands."

"Thus, Anna be it," said he, "from this moment—Anna, my friend, to whom my heart turns with the tenderness of a brother, who gives you for ever the affections of one, and the rights of a sister over him."

"Only death shall dissolve that tie," cried she, throwing herself into his arms; "in that name, Arthur, your privileges as one are established in my heart for ever, and I claim you through life by it as my guardian and protector."

He

He pressed her to his heart with the sincerity and love of one. Heaven seemed to direct these lovely children of nature to that sacred spot, to form their mutual vows; and the spirits of the departed beings, said to wander in that particular chamber, seemed to them as if smiling on their endearing union, and blessing them as they formed it.

"And now," cried Arthur, "I ask of you, as my sister, to acquiesce in my further request. I am going far from you, my lovely Anna, far from your beloved friend Emily. I'll tell you all my weakness: were she, in my absence, to be married, as she may, I never wish to see her more. Will you then, my Anna, be my correspondent? Tell me of Emily, and tell me of yourself; lay open your heart to your brother; inform me all its happiness—all its disquietudes; and should any person, from the Noble to the beggar, dare to insult you, Arthur makes your wrongs his, and

and will defend them; and whatever are his fortunes, he shares them with you."

"Oh, Arthur!" cried Anna, "thus protected I can brave all dangers—and I faithfully promise to comply with your request. But set your heart at rest, my beloved brother, for something tells me you will meet Emily Grenville at your return; her heart sighs not after grandeur, and I am convinced that when she bestows it, fortune or rank will be of lesser considerations to the object—and, with the man she loved, the cottage would possess as many charms as the palace."

How soothing were these words to Arthur's mind!—yet he did not venture to form any hopes from them: young, and sanguine in his expectations of entering the world, he could only look forward to its smiles, by which he might dare to raise his thoughts to the lovely being that engrossed them; but assured of her being free, he believed it would stimulate his enterprising

enterprising spirit to soar to fame, honour, and fortune.

He attended Anna to the outward door, which she gently opened.—" Good night, my lovely Anna," cried Arthur, pressing her hand to his lips; " may every good angel guard you!—and, Oh! dearest Anna, forget not all your promises."

" When I forget them," said she, " Arthur, or you, I shall be forgotten by the world, and have ceased to remember myself. Farewell, and may your prayers for me remain on your own head, and return you to your friends—to your Anna, with every wish of your noble heart fully accomplished."

She closed the door, and turning the key slowly and softly, passed on to her chamber.

The demon of mischief, who busies herself often where she is not wanted, chose

chose to rove about the Castle, while the innocent Anna conversed with Arthur, stationing herself at last at Emily's elbow, who had been some time in bed; and no sooner had the troublesome fiend taken her stand, than she became restless, and, wondering at her friend's long delay, it struck her that Henry and she were in conversation; and dreading any discovery through it reaching Lord de Courcy, she hastily jumped out of bed, put her feet in her slippers, and throwing a large dressing-gown round her, gently descended for the purpose of calling Anna. But the mischievous sprite was before her; and just as she arrived at the steps entering the corridor, threw open the door for Anna to pass, and discovered her and Arthur to the astonished eyes of Emily, as her ears took in their two last speeches, and returned her back to the apartment she had just quitted, bewildered, amazed, thunderstruck, and with all the pangs of jealousy working at her bosom, to convince her of her

her own feelings for Arthur, and the base deceit of Anna to the unhappy De Courcy.

She entered her bed, which she had time sufficient to do by the delay of Anna locking the door, who, coming up immediately after, softly asked her was she asleep? Emily feigned to be so; and Anna, the happy, innocent Anna, gently stole to the side of her friend for fear of disturbing her, where, in her dreams, she again conversed with Arthur, and united in the sweet tie of affection her beloved De Courcy, nor thought of the pangs she had unconsciously given her equally dear Emily, who, with unclosed eyes, passed the night in wretched and distracting reflections.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

"Thy numbers, Jealousy, to nought were fix'd,
Sad proof of thy distressful state;
Of differing themes the varying song was mix'd,
And now it courted love—now, raving, call'd on hate."

ODE ON THE PASSIONS.

THE returning morning found Emily indisposed and feverish; she could not conceal her being so—and Anna, alarmed, tenderly enquired the cause of her illness?

"It is of trifling consequence," replied Emily, coldly; "I will remain in bed to-day, and nurse myself."

"Not whilst I am near you," said Anna; "my dear Emily, that is my office."

"I thank

"I thank you, Miss Jeffries——"

"Miss Jeffries!" repeated Anna, without giving her time to proceed; "what means that appellation, Emily? Except when speaking of me, I never heard it pass your your lips before."

"I am not well able to answer your interrogation at present," replied she.—"If you're going down, I will thank you to send Margarette to me. I think some tea may do my head good."

"And why Margarette—why not Anna?" said she: "You are not kind to me, Emily. But you are ill—forgive me. The mind cannot be in harmony, when the frame is affected. I'll bring you some tea."

"No," said Emily, pettishly, "I shall not trouble you. If my mind is discordant, old Margarette is, I believe, the only person here who can retune it; let her bring the tea, or I will not have any."

Anna burst into tears.—"You are offended with me, Emily," she sobbed out; "I see plainly you are; Heaven knows,

for I do not, the cause; yet whatever may have given rise to it, do, Emily, I entreat you, inform me; you know not how miserable you make me."—She leaned over her in the bed, and took her hand as she spoke. Emily withdrew it; she was silent; her pride prevented her from an explanation, by which she would have relieved her mind from all its uneasiness, as Anna intended telling her what had passed the night before between her and Arthur, and, perhaps too, give her an opportunity of judging his real sentiments for her—but this coldness of Emily's sealed up the lips of Anna from every attempt at conversation.

"Then Emily," said Anna, dejectedly, "for I'll not call you Miss Grenville, I will not importune you at present with my questions, or obtrude on you my company longer; only, will you permit me to give Margarette the tea for you?"

"If you please," was the reply, as Anna left the room, with her heart almost bursting.

Emily,

Emily, by herself, pondered over the scene she had recently witnessed:—she beheld Arthur press the hand of Anna to his lips, as he blessed and called her his "lovely Anna;" and she—Oh, how tender had been her expressions! Arthur then loved her, and she him; yet why should Emily condemn him for loving a lovely object? He broke no faith to her; he committed no dishonourable action. And Anna—if she was faithless to De Courcy, she was more to be pitied for the weakness of her nature, than blamed for the badness of her heart. Arthur was formed to be loved; Emily felt he was, and why should she condemn another for a passion she was now but too sensible of? Had she told Anna she loved Arthur, then had she been guilty of the deepest, the basest ingratitude; but, except in general terms, she had not spoken of him—therefore Anna could only be accused of deception to De Courcy, and that was answerable but to him, and her own breast.

To drive Arthur from her thoughts was, at present, all she had to do, and that was as necessary for her own peace, as it was honourable to Anna; and to account to her for the unkindness she had shewn, by pleading for its excuse the irritability of indisposition.

Margarette brought her the tea, which Emily had hoped, notwithstanding her prohibition, that Anna would have been the bearer of; she was, however, disappointed. Anna's heart was severely wounded; she felt the unkindness of Emily most accutely; yet even that had not kept her away—but she conceived her company would be disagreeable, and she would not venture to obtrude it at a time when composure was necessary for the restoration of her friend.

Arthur appeared after breakfast; his presence restored some degree of serenity to the bosom of Anna. She was kind and attentive to him; but, as De Courcy knew not

not the dear friendship they had made, she gave no uneasy sensations to his heart, by displaying more than a generous frankness before him. But Anna was too noble to conceal her conduct from the man to whom she had given her heart, and was determined to inform him of it at some other time.

Lord de Courcy had, it seems, appointed that evening for Arthur's setting out in their coach, attended by Henry as far as York, where he was to take the mail for London; and De Courcy, seeing him safe off, to return himself to the Castle, which the whole party was then to quit the day after.

This arrangement settled and agreed to, Arthur now doubly lamented the indisposition of Miss Grenville, since by it he was prevented bidding her adieu, perhaps for ever, and thanking her for all her generous exertions in his favour. However anxious he was to commence his career in the busy

world's great scene, he could have wished to defer his going till the next day, when possibly she might be visible to him; but as Lord de Courcy had already settled it, and given necessary instructions to him, and orders to the servants to be in readiness, besides having written the night before to his steward in London to meet a young gentleman at the coach hotel in town, at such a time, who was to take up his abode at his house, and to be attended to, till he himself went up, in the course of a very few days, Arthur could not, in the first instance of his Lordship's desire, attempt running counter to it, or start any objection against setting out when he pleased. The only method, therefore, he could pursue, was to take his leave of her in a respectful billet, which the absolute necessity of proving his attention and gratitude would, he hoped, be an apology for his addressing to her.

As Margarette gave the tea to Emily, who

who desired the old woman to sit down by her bed-side, she perceived on her furrowed countenance an unusual trait of melancholy, and kindly enquired the cause.

"Oh, Lord bless me, Miss!" replied she, with a heavy sigh, "who would have thought of such a thing? There's Arthur, as fine a lad as ever was born, going to some outlandish *forinous* parts, and I never will see him again."

"And why not see him again?" said Emily; "if you live——"

"Please God!" cried Margarette, with quickness, "I hope I will live many a long day, and year too, though I was never to set my eyes on him more—amen. Oh, Lord save me! I don't like to think of death at all, Miss."

"Why?" said Emily: "it would not bring you a bit nearer the time, if you did give it a thought now and then; for you know, Margarette, so sure as we are born,

so sure we must die; and the older we grow, the faster we approach our journey's end."

"I am not so old, Miss, as you may think," cried she, eagerly, and as if her words could prolong her life, or put off the awful hour; "I am but seventy-two or three, and the folks hereabouts live, some on 'em, to long gone a hundred."

"Well I'm sure," said Emily, smiling, "I hope you may live till you're tired of your life. But pray, why are you so grieved at Arthur's going away, with respectable friends who will protect and serve him, and give him an opportunity of making his fortune; I think you should rather be rejoiced at his happy prospects."

"Why so I would, Miss," replied Margarette, "if he was not going so far away; but Lord! Lord! he might make his fortune at home as well—aye, and better too, mayhap, than going among the *goats* and *vandykes* abroad. For I am told, that, in some parts, the

the men and women are not Christians, but all black or tawny *savage Jews* and *mophrodites.*"

"He is not going to any of those places you mention, I assure you, Margarette," said Emily, trying to restrain a laugh; "but to France and Italy, or thereabouts, where there are no black savages to be afraid of."

"But there'swild *beastesses*, Miss, I know," cried the old woman, "in them there parts; for I heard *Monzeer day Jockeycoat*, my late Lord's *Swishish* man, say, that he has seen wolves and boars in the forests there, running about like dogs."

"If he does not go near them," said Emily, "they'll not hurt him—so make your mind easy, Margarette, as to his personal safety."

"And a handsome person it is too, Miss," cried Margarette; "so noble and so proper, he looks like a great gentleman."

"Indeed he does," joined Emily, with a half-suppressed sigh; "he has every ap-

pearance of one, both externally and internally."

"Bless you, Miss," cried Margarette, significantly moving her head, and who, having got into a vein of talking, knew not when to stop, "bless you, Miss, why, he is as like his father, as his two eyes are like one and other, 'bating their ages. Let me see—Arthur was born in midsummer; he was eighteen his last birth-day; and his father might be the matter of twenty-eight or thirty, mayhap, when he died—and what a fine man he was, and so good too!"

"Has he been long dead?" asked Emily.

"Lord bless you, Miss," said the dame, "sure Arthur never *seed* his father; he died in *forinous* parts."

"Was he a soldier?" Emily enquired.

"Indeed I believe he was in his Majesty's service," answered Margarette, "but I'm not sure, though I do think my Lord Fitzwalter knew him somehow that way, when he was in the army himself."

"Then

"Then he lived with my Lord here, I suppose?" said Emily.

"O yes, Miss," said Margarette; "to be sure he was at the Castle, a long time too."

"Was it at the Castle your daughter was married?" asked Emily.

"My daughter, Miss!—to be sure it was," answered she; "she was married to Jenkins—an unhappy day for her she ever saw him—went off from her, and she never saw him after."

"She has been a very careful mother to Arthur, however," said Miss Grenville; "and I make no doubt of *her* being well pleased at his acquiring such good friends."

Margarette shook her head, implying to the contrary.—"Then too, Miss," adding she, "going off this evening, that nobody has hardly any time to think any thing about it."

"Going off this evening!" repeated Emily, in an accent of surprise, for she had not learned of Lord de Courcy's sudden

determination before; "indeed, are you certain, Margarette?"

"To be sure, Miss, I am," she answered: "the coach is ordered to be ready immediately after their honours have dined; and Mr. De Courcy is going with Arthur part of the way—and there's he and the other young lady gone together to the Wood-house. Pretty creature she is—looks so kindly at Arthur—and holds his arm so lovingly; to be sure, and why shouldn't she? He's as good as any Lord that ever stept in shoe-leather, only not so finely drest: but then it shews she's a true gentlewoman to have no pride—you real gentlefolks never have; it is only the upstarts that treat the *nefarious* with *hostility*."

At Margarette's concluding speech Emily found herself fatigued, or pettish: she desired to be left alone, and the old woman quitted the room; she laid her head on the pillow. Arthur then was going: the sudden resolution she attributed to the right person —Lord

—Lord de Courcy; but, she thought, he might contrive some way of telling her so, from himself—it would be a little mark of respect, which, she thought, she deserved from him. He could easily send a message by his grandmother, or Anna——Anna!—no. He and Anna were gone lovingly together to the Wood-house, therefore it could not be expected he could think of her at this time: he might probably remember her as he was setting off, and leave his compliments, perhaps respects, for her, which Anna too might forget to deliver. No matter; she did not wish him the worse for his neglect, and the object that caused it, she acknowledged to be a *fair* excuse. Such were the meditations of Emily, for some time, when, in the midst of a recapitulation of them, the chamber door slowly opened, and again Margarette made her appearance. Emily had no desire for her conversation at this moment, nor any inclination to speak herself, therefore took no notice of her.

"Lord! Lord!" cried the old woman, "how my poor bones do ache, and my knees twitter, with coming along these great stairs! I must sit down and rest 'em a bit. Are you asleep, Miss?" added she, throwing back the curtain; "here's a note for you."

"A note!" cried Emily, rising up in the bed with quickness; "from who, Margarette?"

"From the other young lady, Miss," she answered: "she gave it to me this minute, and bid me make haste to you with it; she would not come herself, she said, as she was afraid of disturbing you."

"The same reason held good with your coming," said Emily, not appearing half pleased, nor very anxious to open it; "and of the two," thought she, "Anna would make the less noise."

Emily was indeed in a vain of humour to be displeased at every thing, and with every body; for believing herself neglected by Anna,

Anna, and not as much as thought of [illegible] Arthur, it was not to be wondered at if she felt some anger against both. But her resentment soon subsided, and her peevishness gave place to the natural goodness of her heart, when, opening the little billet, she perceived it written in a hand unknown to her, but saw at the bottom the name of—Arthur.

"I have wronged him," thought she, blushing either at her former suspicions, or the present agreeable termination of them, and hastily run over these words:

"The sudden and unexpected determination of Lord de Courcy to send me hence this evening, will, I hope, plead my excuse with Miss Grenville for the liberty I take in thus addressing her. I need not say, Madam, how truly I lament the unpleasant cause which prevents me the honour,

honour, and indeed the happiness, of seeing you, once more, before I forego that pleasure for so long a period, perhaps for ever—to thank you for all your goodness to me—and tell you how gratefully I do, and shall eternally, feel it. I thought I should have quitted this place without regret, but I find it otherwise; I must go, unaccompanied by your kind farewell, and my mind will still turn to it, as wanting that last proof of your good wishes. Could I, from your chamber door, even hear you say—"Adieu, Arthur, may success attend you with honour," I think that wish, from your lips, would make me happy. But I dare not, do not, presume to solicit a request beyond what it is your own pleasure to grant. Should I never see you again, Madam, receive the faithful assurance of my respect, my gratitude, my prayers for your health and happiness through life; but, if it is decreed I am again to meet my amiable, generous friend, I trust, in whatever station it is my lot to encounter, I may

may be found meriting a continuance of that friendship, which, to preserve and be worthy of, is, and ever will be, the first and dearest wish of your faithful and respectful servant,

"ARTHUR."

Emily's ill humour vanished; her illness subsided; she was so much better on a sudden, that she believed she might venture to rise. Poor Arthur! he wished to see her—to take his leave of her; and why not indulge him in this trifling desire? It would not be kind of her to let him go off without bidding him some kind of adieu; it would be destroying all her hopeful purposes at once, by leaving him to imagine she cared no further for his success—that would be ungenerous of her. Did she go down, it would convince him her good wishes were as much his as ever; it would gratify him, and it would not be any injury to

to herself; there was nothing improper in it—and she was sure, besides, that she would find herself much better up than a-bed. All these things considered, Emily, dismissing Margarette, and, telling her she would reply some other time to the note, jumped, with uncommon alacrity for an invalid, from her couch, and, with equal avidity, arrayed herself in a becoming morning dress, in which, to speak truly, she did not look either very languid, or very ill; but that might proceed from the hectic of her complexion—and no sooner was her toilet finished, whereat she never gave up much time, and less now, as her negligent attire did not require it, than she descended, till, reaching the corridor, a little obtrusive thought struck her, and she leaned over the balcony to give it a few minutes reflection.

Anna had sent her up the note: it was not improbable then but Anna was acquainted with the contents of it—therefore,

fore, did she go down, her reason for it would be attributed by her to a desire of complying with Arthur's wish; there could be no other ascribed for her so suddenly leaving her bed—and Anna might *possibly* imagine she had as great a wish herself to see *him*, which was no such thing, but solely from a motive of obliging him. Then, Arthur, too—would he not entertain the like opinion, and admit an idea of his having some power over her, and, perhaps, both laugh at her folly? Then Lord de Courcy and Henry—they would say she was hypochondriac, and ridicule her vaporish symptoms. No, she would not go; she would return to bed again; and, if Anna or Margarette came, send her farewell to Arthur by one or the other; or, did he like it better, he might come with either of them to her chamber door, and she would bid him adieu. Yes, that was a more advisable plan to pursue; for what was Arthur to her, or she to him? He cared only for Anna, and a sentiment of gratitude,

tude alone impelled his wish of seeing her —that she believed; and he might also credit her good wishes for his prosperity, sent him by any person, no matter who. But the air from the corridor was so reviving, it did her good, and she would walk there a few minutes: she did so, and by *chance* her steps turned towards the door where she had seen Anna with Arthur the night preceding; she thought she would like to look into it, and laid her hand on the lock, but admittance was then denied her—it was fast; she essayed again—it was locked, indeed. Then how came Anna to get into the chamber? or how Arthur? She could not, however, and was therefore turning from it, when she heard a key working in the lock; and, looking round, she perceived the door opening, and beheld—Arthur.

The hectic deepened on Emily's cheek, as, with an expression of surprise and pleasure, he exclaimed—"Miss Grenville! is

is it possible?—Am I indeed so fortunate as to see you once more, ere I leave this place? and so happy as to find you sufficiently restored to quit your apartment?"

Emily was more than a little confused. "I found my room so close," said she, blushing and faltering at her slight deviation from truth, "I fancied a turn here might exhilirate my spirits."

"You wished to enter this chamber, I believe," said he: "permit me, Miss Grenville, to lead you to a seat there."

"I did not particularly desire it," she replied, as giving him her hand he conducted her forwards; "but I found myself fatigued, and tried, was there any door open, where I could rest a while."

Arthur brought her but to the library, and placing a chair for her, shut the door. —Emily felt she was now in the same situation of Anna last night; but then the hour and time was very different.

"This

"This is a *convenient* chamber," said she, drily.

"I have found it so," replied Arthur, not attaching any particular meaning to her words.

"Yes," said she, "I apprehend you have, and so do I now, and so, I dare say, have others."

"I took the liberty of sending you a note, Miss Grenville," said he, hesitatingly: "I know not whether you may have yet received it."

"Yes," replied she, assuming a careless indifference, "I did; and I believe I threw it on my dressing-table above."

"*Threw* it on her dressing-table!"—Arthur's fine face glowed with a momentary flash of insulted pride.

"I own, Madam," said he, "it was presumptuous in me to address a letter to you, but I was in hopes that my wish of proving I was not insensible of your favours, would have,

have, at this time, apologized for my temerity. Had I looked for the honour of seeing you, I would have spared your feelings the insult you seem to think offered them, and my own the mortification of believing it thought so."

"You have a noble spirit, Arthur," she cried, "and I like you for it: but had I conceived your noté an insult, I would have returned it to its writer; and I believe," continued she, with a smile that restored his former serenity, "on recollection, I did not *throw* it on my dressing-table, but put it gently in my pocket.—And, *ecce signum*—you see I'm a Latin scholar."

"Have you gone through the grammar, Miss Grenville?" asked Arthur, with a peculiar enquiry in his intelligent eye; "the first verb begins with "Amo."

"No," replied she, "I have not made as much progress in it as you appear to have done."

Arthur's

Arthur's tell-tale countenance betrayed the truth of what she said, but he feared she was more correct in her suspicions than she really happened to be: while she, observing his confusion, mistook it for a different cause.

"So, you do go away to-day?" cried she, without noticing his embarrassment further. "Believe me, then, Arthur, you have not a friend who more truly wishes you success through life, or more heartily desires to hear of, though she should not witness, your happiness."

"I thank you, Madam," he replied; "you have convinced me, beyond mere words, of your good wishes for my prosperity and happiness. But even the mediation of an earthly angel towards promoting it, might not, in certain cases, certify it fully."

"I don't apprehend you have much to despond at," said Emily, with a strong emphasis, "on your first setting out in life.

life. Yet if you even had—"Faint heart never won fair lady."—Now you have not a faint heart, and the fair lady may be already won."

Arthur fixed his eyes on her face, as if to read whether there was any meaning in her expression, by which he could admit a distant hope of it being herself she alluded to; but he traced it there in vain; Emily betrayed no conscious blush of modesty, to indicate the most remote avowal of such sentiments; she was careless, easy, and indifferent.

"Were that indeed true," replied Arthur, in answer to her last words, "with what encreased avidity would I enter my career of life, and think every danger or difficulty I should encounter in the pursuit of my fortunes but trifling, if, when succeeding in my endeavours, I might hope to lay them at her feet, and claim my reward in her smiles."

Emily thought this rather a strange speech for a person who already appeared so highly favoured by his mistress; but as she was not supposed to be acquainted with any particular circumstances, it did not, on recollection, seem very inconsistent.

"I would like to know a little," said Emily, "how you go on, or how you approve of the world, which I may possibly do, through means of Miss Jeffries."

"Miss Jeffries!" he repeated; "has Anna then informed you of——"

Emily relapsed into her pettish humour.

"She has informed me nothing," cried she, interrupting him; "neither have I a desire to pry into any person's secret concerns. I only mention her, as being the most probable channel of information, from the possibility of her sometimes hearing from De Courcy; though, on recollection, I believe

believe there is little chance from that quarter."

"Anna's heart," said Arthur, "is the repository of every gentler virtue; and I trust, the man who possesses it, will know how to estimate its value; and that Miss Grenville will ever continue her friendship. The desertion of either would, I think, severely affect her."

"I detain you too long," cried Emily, rising as she spoke, and not attending to his eulogium of Anna. "You must have some more material business to attend to at this moment, than an idle conversation: Besides, I think I feel fatigued. God bless you, Arthur; and should we ever meet again, I hope it will be on as friendly terms as we part."

* * *

Emily might feel friendly disposed at the moment; but her manner was cold and uninteresting. Arthur felt it so at his soul, yet he did not dare complain.

"I may, perhaps, never see Miss Grenville again," said he, dejectedly.

"As to seeing me," cried she, "that's of the least consequence; we are both young enough to look for an extent of life beyond two years; and provided we are well and happy, it matters not if—"far as the poles asunder."—But should you meet me, and not Miss Grenville, I shall be equally as pleased to see you by any other name as that."

How different had been Emily's expressions to her friend, did not the spirit of jealousy rankle at her heart, to choak up the avenues of kindness and affability! All the arguments she had adduced in her mind to reconcile the scene she had been, unfortunately, witness to, as neither deserving her resentment or her anger, but as the ordination of fate, in which no dishonour attached to Arthur, could protect her from again encountering its baneful tendency, as he so warmly mentioned Anna;

Anna; yet her honest nature told her she was unjust to him, and almost contemptible to herself, in thus allowing a mean passion to subdue her better reason, and shadow the generous sentiments she had before so openly displayed.

Emily's heart was warm, benevolent, and forgiving; and when she gave a moment's time to reflection, it was certain to resume its natural propensities. This one restored every nobler feeling, and gave to Arthur all his claims of friendship; who, impressed and distressed at the coldness of her manner, stood irresolute, astonished, and confounded.

"I believe," said she, once more smiling good-humouredly on him, "I am so little used to indisposition that it has made me petulant and unkind; but forgive me, Arthur," extending her hand to him; "it has not lessened my esteem for you, and I

know you are too generous not to make allowance for female inconsistencies."

Arthur kissed her hand rapturously.

"I know of none attached to you," cried he, passionately; "you are, in my eyes, as perfect as woman can be." But fearing he had said too much—"have you not been my friend, my benefactress, my celestial genius? and should I not consider you in every endearing light? Ah! Miss Grenville, if you wished to punish me, deprive me of your friendship, and I should be a wretched being indeed. Continue it to me, and though fortune frowns, I'll smile at her malice, and triumph in the blessing she cannot arrest from me."

"It is yours," cried Emily, "through all contingencies of life; and whether the blind goddess smiles or frowns on you, no fate or fortune shall rob you of my friendship, or change, unless to augment it."

"Lovely,

"Lovely, amiable, generous Miss Grenville, could I ask for more?" said Arthur. —"Yet the mind of man is not to be easily satisfied; even gratified beyond his fondest hopes, he still looks forward for encrease of happiness, and to the object where his wishes tend, his soul hovers for its further attainment."

This speech, though directed to Emily, she could not adjudge to herself, believing what she did respecting Anna; and though Arthur almost hoped she would notice it, he dreaded a reproof for his temerity, and a check to the ardour of his wishes. She did not; and again his mind dwelt on the probability of her silence being the best reproof her delicacy wished to give him.

"I'll see you, I think, again before you set out," said she. "I intend going down in the evening, and I may as well venture half an hour earlier, for the happiness of beholding my friend the last time, as half an hour

later, in the dull society of my own thoughts and a solitary chamber: therefore I shall have the pleasure of once more bidding you adieu, and wishing you, as I do now, every prosperity and happiness in life, your own heart can desire."

"And by your wishes only can it be fully gratified," said he, softly, as Emily, quitting the room, retired up to her own.

Here she pondered over the late interview with Arthur, recalled his words and looks to her mind, dwelt on the impassioned warmth with which he conveyed many of the former; but still they were unconnected with herself. Anna was the object he had in view, and Anna did, indeed, occupy every tender idea; then be it so. Why should she suffer a selfish thought to obtrude, destructive to her own happiness and peace, or inimical to the sacred name of friendship? Away then every narrow, illiberal prejudice, from that moment, was expelled the bosom of Emily, and restored tranquillity

tranquillity revived, with encreased affection, the fond attachment her lovely and beloved Anna therein commanded for ever after. How did she now wish for that dear girl's appearance, when candidly acknowledging to her all the ill-natured workings of her heart, she would lay it open to her inspection, and claim forgiveness of her, in her repentance of having so unkindly repulsed her tender assiduities.

A return of virtue, however slight the deviation from it, expands the generous mind with nobler sentiments, when contrasting the extremes. Emily fully experienced it: she was before restless, dissatisfied, and unkind; she was now composed, tranquil, and harmonized, in favour with herself, and every other being. She sat at the window, enjoying the glorious prospect a glowing summer's day represents over an expanse of cultivated country, and the rich suffusion of the tinted sky was not more lovely than her animated counte-

nance, cheered by the sunshine of a contented mind, and a heart composed, tranquil, and happy.

While thus absorbed in the contemplation of a bountiful Provider's gracious gifts to man, who formed the world for his lordly use, and bestowed on him understanding to enjoy his merciful benefits, did he not too often destroy the wise intent, by lavishing in excesses the noble faculties given him by Heaven, as a blessing for himself and fellow-creatures; but immersed in the pursuit of riotous pleasures, or vain ambition, forgets, too frequently, the duty owed to God and himself; nor considers the time must arrive when he will be called upon to render up his account, and where, before the great tribunal of Heavenly justice, no earthly appeal will be found to weigh against its immutable decrees; the oppressor of innocence will tremble before the judge of justice; the envenomed slanderer will himself feel the scorpion's

scorpion's sting; and the betrayer of sacred trust will shrink, when the mirror of truth is held up, and unveils the deception and ingratitude of his heart, for the examination of its great and awful Inquisitor.

"Let the galled horse wince, my withers are unwrung."

The door opened, and Anna timidly entered, holding in her hand a small waiter, on which was a bason of soup and some chicken. Emily's eyes sparkled with pleasure.

"Dear Emily," cried Anna, "I am so happy to see you out of bed. You look so well too—quite a different creature from what I saw you this morning. I wished to have come up before, but was afraid of disturbing you: and now I thought poor old Margarette would be so fatigued passing so often those great stairs. —I have brought you something to refresh you; will you not take it, Emily?"

"Good, kind Anna," said Emily, "your words imply an apology for your supposed intrusion; I will partake of them, but not till I have your forgiveness for my ungenerous, unfeeling conduct to you this morning, nor until I have it, can I be reconciled to myself."

"Oh! Emily, my dear loved friend," cried Anna, throwing her arms round her, "I have nothing to forgive; you were neither ungenerous or unfeeling. Your indisposition alone rendered you uneasy and fretful: I was more to blame for suffering it to impress my mind, which it did, with an idea of your diminished friendship. But now I see you yourself again, my dear Emily, my heart beats light and happy."

The two amiable girls were once more united in the tenderest amity. Anna arranged the repast for Emily, and sat by her side whilst she partook of it; till recollecting the hour it was, the latter begged of her

her to go down to dinner, which by the time she imagined to be over, she would herself follow.

"It is not yet ready," replied Anna, "or rather the gentlemen are not ready for it. Lord de Courcy is quite uneasy about one of the coach horses wanting to be shod, which he is apprehensive may occasion some delay to Henry and Arthur's setting out this evening, and is gone into the village to look after the smith, and hasten it himself; and Arthur, with De Courcy, are out walking in the wood."

"Are you not concerned at Arthur's going away?" asked Emily.

"Indeed, Emily," replied Anna, "I should be so, did I not know how much more advantageous it will prove to him than spending his life in this sequestered spot. I have much to tell you of him and me," continued she, "which will surprise you as much as it has, on reflection, done me; for only that I see Arthur, to confirm the truth

of what has passed, I should be apt to impute it to a fiction of my brain, which had no foundation but the airy visions of the night. Yet the sentiments which, at first sight of him, my heart imbibed, are for ever imprinted there; and my imagination in vain seeks a cause to sanction the claims I feel are his due, though I know not to what to impute them."

Anna then related the transactions of the preceding night, without concealing the most trifling part, not even that which brought her to discover him in the chamber, while the astonished Emily listened with wonder and encreasing interest, as the gentle innocent speaker unveiled every sentiment of her heart.

"Can you, Emily, my friend," added Anna, as she concluded her detail, "whose understanding is so far more comprehensive than mine, fathom those intuitive feelings? they seem to me as possessing an inspiration

inspiration nearly divine, and that Heaven conducted us to that chamber to form the tender alliance, for in no other could my heart have experienced such sweet, such indefinable sensations. You may call me weak and fanciful, if you please, Emily, but I thought the room shone with celestial brightness, and the bed as if surrounded with rays of heavenly lustre."

"Indeed," replied Emily, "my beloved Anna, your account fills my mind with no less astonishment than wonder. I am not an unbeliever, neither am I gifted with any prejudging powers; yet something impels me to think that Arthur and you may be unknown relatives, and this accounts for your strong and uncommon attachment to each other: it is not in the least improbable, and may be truly possible."

"Yet even so," replied Anna, "I could hardly experience so tender an affection. I know not in what language to describe it to you; I have none that could do justice to it. He seems as if part of myself, or rather

rather my second self; and when I look at him, Emily, I think I behold in him every dear tie which could connect me in the world. It is not like what I feel for De Courcy. Ah! no," added she, "my affection for Arthur has not impaired my love for him; I believe, on the contrary, it has encreased, by the distinction my heart makes between both: and Arthur has acknowledged to me the selection his has ventured to make, though hopeless of his ever daring to make an avowal to its possessor."

Anna directed her looks to Emily, as she spoke, whose face was crimsoned over with the blushes of conscious shame for her own suspicions, and a secret hope of her being the person. His words to her that morning, were again hastily run over in her thoughts, and they now attached to herself, she found, with more propriety than to Anna. Yet she might still be mistaken; there was, perhaps, some other object she knew

knew nothing of; but least the error which before had misled her judgment, should start up in another form to disturb her senses, and jar her reason, she banished every flattering hope, or doubtful idea, connected with the subject, leaving it to time and fate to dispose of its future events.

Anna did not dare venture to betray the full confession of Arthur, least it might not be pleasing him, although to Emily she believed she might hazard a full discovery, without much danger of incurring her anger or displeasure. She imagined, however, that what she did say was sufficient to give her a just idea of the person she pointed to, and yet not of a nature to offend her pride, (if any she felt on the occasion) by displaying any resentment to him for (what she might, in that case, consider) his presumptuous and aspiring views.

Emily made her appearance below, at the time she stated; but all enquiry, as to her

her health, was unthought of, when her friends looked in her face; it was suffused with the flush of joy, and dimpled with the smiles of hope. She was lively, animated, and agreeable, and to Arthur, by whom she seated herself, peculiarly marked in her attentions. Anna alone, of the company, was conscious of the cause, and her heart joyed to think that Emily's was not insensible of her dear Arthur's merit, or offended at the distinction his had decidedly made. She, at times, directed her looks to Emily, with such expressive meaning in them, that it was impossible for her to mistake what they bespoke; then would a betraying blush tacitly avow Anna's surmises, and a significant smile convey as just a reply as a volume of words.

Arthur was in ecstacy; never had he seen Miss Grenville to so much advantage, never had she been so tenderly kind and attentive to him. Her manners, now so different from what they had appeared in the

the morning, when cold and often repulsive, he dreaded having, unknowingly, offended her; or, what was more distracting to his mind, to think that she, who he had fancied possessed of every amiable feminine virtue, without *any* of its little foibles, was, indeed, capricious and unsettled; for as he could acquit himself of any wilful or intentional error, since he had the happiness of being known to her, he could hardly ascribe the formal and distant part of her late behaviour to any other or juster motive. But, at present, every word she uttered was a charm, every movement a new grace; and the moments went over, unheeded in their progress, and almost unmarked, till a servant entering, announced the coach was ready, which brought him to a recollection of his being on the point of bidding her farewell, perhaps in this world an eternal one.

Emily turned pale as the waning moon, or when envious clouds, shadowing her mild

mild lustre, obscure the beauties they cannot wholly conceal. Anna started forward.

"This apartment is too close for you, my dear Emily," said she, thus considerately attributing her varying colour to a very probable cause: "I thought you would find it so, together with the unpleasant smell an invalid is so sensible of, from an eating-room. Would you venture a little into the air, it could not hurt you, I think."

Emily took the arm of her friend, as she gently pressed it, to shew she felt her generous intention; when Arthur immediately presented his at the other side.

"We are not ready to set off yet," said he, as Mr. De Courcy has some little business to arrange with his Lordship, therefore, if you'll permit me, Miss Grenville, I'll assist you along with your friend."

Emily

Emily accepted his offer, and they went a little way into the wood, where she found herself much better; and Anna, thinking her company might be an intrusion at this hasty moment, suddenly recollected Emily's being without her cloak, by want of which she might take cold, withdrew, as an excuse to fetch it.

"The moment is come at last," said Arthur, when she was out of sight, "that I must bid a long adieu to my dear, my invaluable friend. Ah, Madam, this moment tells me how unworthy I am of the favours I am going to receive, since it is with regret I leave this place." He was near saying—"Since it is with regret I leave *you*," —but fear of displeasing her checked the truth.

"Do not regret it, Arthur," she replied, endeavouring to appear composed, "since I fondly and firmly hope it will pave your way to every future happiness in life."

"It may to my fortunes, Miss Grenville,"

ville," cried he; "but to my happiness, that is placed on an eminence too high for me to reach it."

"Nay, Arthur," said Emily, smiling kindly at him, "you should not despond—you must not."

"If you bid me not," exclaimed he, "I shall not. If you bid me look forward to happiness, where can I turn for it, but where I am desired to hope its attainment?"

Emily paused a few moments: Arthur was going away for a long period of time; it was not like an absence of a few weeks, when she might, more progressively, understand his real sentiments, but for a term of two years, perhaps more, during which time she must be doubtful of them, was not the present opportunity seized on, which would, one way or other, determine her future conduct. If she was, indeed, the object of his affections, the obscurity of his birth was to her of no consideration; it was respectable, though humble; and in every

every other view he was pre-eminently superior to any man she had ever beheld; it was not only her partial opinion, but that of more competent judges. The world, to be sure, might condemn her for making choice of a peasant, but what was the world to her?—she did not live to please it—she lived to please herself; and if life was but a fleeting shadow, why not secure happiness wherever it was to be found, without paying a deference to the world's opinion, for which she cared very little?—Fortune she had sufficient to establish comfort; for at her coming of age, she would be mistress of six thousand pounds, left to her, unconditionally, by a maiden sister of her father's, and that would give a cottage and competence; she desired no more. Then did Arthur return in favour of the world, and patronized by some of its great leaders, of which there was every probability for thinking so, the lowliness of his origin would be forgot in the brilliancy of his success; it was the case through life—

life—great friends and great fortunes gave consequence to their possessors; no matter how either were obtained, or whether they aggrandized the plebeian or the rogue; and modest worth, which had not hardihood to pursue the fickle goddess, or servility to crouch for her favours to the exalted powers whereby they might be obtained, was suffered to struggle unnoticed through it, to live in poverty, and die in want!

"And where," said Emily, taking up the last words made use of by him, "and where, Arthur, would you desire to find it?"

"Were I to answer you with sincerity, Miss Grenville," he replied, "I might forfeit every shadow of it, and even the friendship I prize above the world's best favours."

"You would not forfeit mine by it," said she, "and there are no other of your friends present, for you to have any fears on that head; and you may rely on me for not betraying you."

Was

Was it possible for Arthur, thus solicited, to preserve his determination of silence? —By breaking it, it was determining his fate at once, and, if fortunately attended, prompting the ardour of rendering himself more worthy of her: if otherwise, fortune's vicissitudes were indifferent to him, and, plunged in the great theatre of life, he would never see her again.

"Do you command me to reply with truth, Miss Grenville?" said he, not a little agitated: "and will you promise, though you may condemn, to forgive me, when I am no longer present?—for the idea of my being despised by you, would stamp the final wretchedness of my existence."

"That," replied she, "I can never do. Nothing but dishonour could awaken such a sentiment, and I am firmly persuaded of its never attaching to you: And the promise you demand I freely make, be your reply to my question what it may, which to enforce, I do not command, but solicit."

"Then you shall be answered, Miss Grenville," said Arthur, falling on one knee, and taking her passive trembling hand. "I love you; 'tis no boyish passion, but one I feel interwoven with my existence; and the happiness I look forward to, as its future blessing, is to be found deserving your favourable opinion."

Emily was answered fully, her heart's dearest wish was gratified, and the humble Arthur was to it a monarch.

"You have it now," replied Emily, "and ——and——"

"You are offended with me," said he, dejectedly. "Ah! Miss Grenville, remember your promise:—it was yourself who urged this avowal, which, otherwise, I had not dared to make. Could I recal it, I would be tempted to unite deceit with untruth, and have recourse to a subterfuge to evade your enquiries."

"I should be sorry you had," replied Emily,

Emily, recovering a little from her embarrassment; "for then you would leave it out of my power to tell you, that if to me you look forward for happiness, by persevering in the noble conduct which first arrested my attention, you will not have to accuse me of withholding it from you at a future period."

"Miss Grenville," cried Arthur, trembling, agitated, doubtful, "what am I to believe?—Do my senses deceive me?—Can I credit?—Gracious Heavens! surely you are too generous to raise hopes, only to reconcile me to my long term of absence, and which may never——"

"Hold, Arthur," said she, interrupting him; "I know what you were going to say, at least I think I do. Did I encourage hopes which I never intended to fulfil, I should be deserving your contempt. I am above the narrow prejudices of the world, and I am too honest to deny it: here's my hand as a pledge of my assurance. Return the same Arthur you leave me, and it is

yours for life: and here," added she, taking from her finger a small chain ring, "here is a further pledge of it, (you may present me with one in return hereafter) and if ever I break my faith, send it to me back with all the ignominy I shall deserve; it will remind you of Emily Grenville; she wants nothing to remember you."

"And when I am unfaithful, or forget her," cried he, assuming an air of innate truth and dignity, "may I perish, with all the infamy on my head that can attend man!"

A voice from the Castle gate halloed out—"Arthur;"—it was De Courcy's—He folded Emily in his arms—

"Farewell, most worshipped of women," he exclaimed—"most beloved of friends. I return with honour, or we never meet more."

"And with that, though fortuneless, the same Emily Grenville meets you. Adieu," added

added she, "and may Heaven protect you!"

They turned to the Castle. De Courcy waited; Arthur pressed the hand of Anna; it was returned with fervour. Margarette stood at a distance, with her apron to her eyes; he bade her an affectionate farewell. Lord de Courcy shook his hand, telling him he would soon see him: Emily's was again tenderly held a moment. Henry jumped into the coach, his friend followed, the postillion smacked his whip, and Arthur was launched into the bustling world.

CHAP. V.

"Thy force alone, religion, death disarms,
Breaks all his darts, and every viper charms.
Softened by thee, the grizzly form appears
No more the horrid object of our fears."

OUR young Ladies, deprived of their two young companions, found the charms of the Castle and its environs less attractive than they had hitherto appeared. Lord de Courcy was, at present, their only guardian; and had not Miss Grenville's volatile spirits risen to counteract the supernatural ones credited belonging to this structure,

structure, Anna's would have become subject to the fanciful impression, and admitted a belief of their certainty.

Even Margarette, who had spent so many years within its solitary walls, exclusive of any inhabitant save old Robert, seemed impressed with renovated apprehensions, at the diminution of the party, and dreaded the arrival of that moment, when the departure of the whole would again enwrap the Castle in solitude and silence, more striking by change, from the short hilarity their company had inspired.

"Ah! young ladies," said the old woman to them, one night that Lord de Courcy having retired to his apartment, they sought to amuse their minds by hearing her repeat some past story, and summoned her to the parlour, as she was become more fearful of encountering the upper apartments at night than ever; and they neither of them were inclined to augment the

natural imbecilities of old age, by urging any demand that could encrease the peculiar weakness of her mind, therefore sat below, where her terrors were less afloat, and her loquacity not so liable to interruption.

"Ah! young ladies," said she, sitting down, as they desired her, "this will be a sad dull place when you are all gone away; for my part, I wish you had never come to it, for all Robert talks of the Castle's looking *summet* as it used to do, when the rest of the grand folks visited it. But I say *them* good times *was* forgot, its so long agone; and when we sit all alone below, and think of the late good company, I'm sure I shall wish you often and often back again.

"I think it is not unlikely," replied Emily, "but what we may return here about next summer; though not exactly the same party; but I should have no objection to paying you another visit, if I could muster

muster up sufficient forces to attend me, and this young lady."

"To be sure, Miss," answered Margarette, "I would be glad to see you in it again, you have such good spirits, and are not *frighted* at any thing. But there now, there's all the cold *drearybons* winter, with the winds blowing through the old walls, and the trees shaking so, that I often think they are tearing out of the ground; then the owls and the bats live in the building all that time, and make such a noise, with the rats and mice, and other gentry. Lord bless me, I'm sure I've often shook in my bed with fear, till I thought my poor bones was all *desolated*, like one of them *gypsie mummers* my late Lord had in his study, that he brought over with him from abroad."

"It will, indeed, be a dreary place," said Anna; "nor would I like to stop in it at that season, without cheerful company to relieve its melancholy gloom."

"To you, Anna," replied Emily, "it

would be sombre indeed: but my good dame here has passed so many of those dismal seasons within its compass, that I only wonder why the approaching one has for her any more gloomy prospects than what the past have produced. Winter hath most truly a comfortless aspect for those who are, unhappily, fated to meet its rigours, unprovided with the means of dispelling its chilling qualities; houseless, friendless, pennyless, shivering beneath the freezing blast, and enveloping their benumbed limbs in the scanty externals of their wretchedness; pining under the pressing wants of life's support, and supplicating from every passing stranger the humble mite to succour drooping existence—these are, indeed, objects of commiseration; yet, alas! how many of these miserable children of poverty detail their calamitous story to the affluent *stoics*, who hear the humble appeal to their compassion, without bestowing a thought on the wretched applicant, as revelling in all the luxuries wealth

wealth can bring, they are insensible to the distresses they have never felt, and deaf to the necessities they have never wanted.—Oh, why," continued the animated speaker, acquiring energy as her heart imbibed the truths her lips uttered, "oh, why is it that those to whom Heaven hath bestowed with a liberal hand the blessings of this world, are so slow in extending theirs to succour a fellow creature?—Why is it, that surrounded with the favours their great Provider so profusely gives, they are insensible to the soul-pleading eloquence of entreating poverty, and withhold the trifling donation that would renovate the existence of a starving family, at the same hour, perhaps, that they disperse hundreds of pounds to gratify ambition, in the delicacies of a feast, or the magnificence of an apartment; though the shilling purloined from those hundreds would be as a drop of water from the stream, and the splendour of their houses would appear with redoubled brilliancy; when the mo-

would be sombre indeed [illegible] ly—"I dame here has passed s[illegible] ature of mal seasons within it[illegible] g in the wonder why the ar[illegible] bly, from her any more gl[illegible] giving him the past have p[illegible] aving nature; I truly a comf[illegible] e means of warming are, unhap[illegible], and solacing his wearied unprovi[illegible] ed; his half-starved children its chi[illegible] structed to raise their feeble hands, pen[illegible] ploring a blessing on me; and my own bl[illegible] house is not a palace, but a paradise!"—Sweeter than honey, or the honey-comb, are the actions of a benevolent mind to its own heart! Would the great and affluent feel extent of happiness, let them not haughtily contemn the miserable suppliant, because poverty clothes the wretched form in tattered rags, and want impresses the squalid visage with sickness and sorrow; let them not slight the entreating petition, because blistered or sullied with the tears of a lacerated bosom: but, above all, though they even should repulse the piteous appeal,

'm guard against a more con-
'unication of their unfeel-
'ough the medium of a
'erious porter, who,
.e great man's hall,
.ıpt the solicitor who
.ıı, and, to obey the orders of
.er or mistress, insolently adheres to
.ir commands, and imperiously subjoins his own authoritative situation; shutting the door in the face of the humble, miserable mendicant, from which he deserves to be ignominiously driven himself; saucily telling them, they have no business there—his Lord or Lady never receive petitions—they have other affairs to attend to, besides engrossing their time with such trash, or throwing away their money on such wretches—neither does *he* wait there to answer *such* creatures—and, have they the insolence to come again, *he* will teach them how they will be troublesome in future, by ordering them a cooler under the horse pump, and setting loose the stable

stable dogs to hunt them afterwards. Oh, ye great and affluent leaders of the nation!" continued Emily, "it is *no* false picture I draw; such too frequently is the dogmatical character that fills your hall's great chair, and, I will suppose, too often replies, of his own accord, in the unfeeling language his principals dictate. And, Oh! if you have a hope beyond this world's happiness, shut not your hearts, or your doors, to pleading poverty, who bends with humility to you as its sole resource—be laudable in your actions, and bestow your charities where direful want demands them; so will your *merciful* Master repay you hereafter—and when death shuts from your view the fleeting joys of this subhunary life, the portals of heaven will be thrown open to receive you, and its immortal happiness be your everlasting reward!"

The interesting speaker ceased; her lovely eyes bore testimony of the interest her heart partook in the afflicting detail, and

and those of the mild Anna accorded in sympathy.

"Well," cried old Margarette, who had attentively listened, "thank God, I have not that sin to answer for, of ever turning away a poor creature from the Castle gates without relieving them; if I had, or any one of my fellow-servants, we might have walked out ourselves. My late Lord—he was a good man—no one dared to speak a smart word to the poorest creature that comed to the door; and he gave with such free good will, that he must be a saint in Heaven, for all he walks about the place here o' nights. Then our present Lady—just such another good soul; ah! it was a sad day that she left us."

"And the cause of it," said Emily, "a most lamentable one! Poor Lady Fitzwalter! her trials have been severe!—Pray, Margarette, do you remember her Ladyship's brother, Mr. Villeroy? I understand him to have been a counterpart of

his amiable sister, and a very handsome man."

"Aye, that he was," replied Margarette; "as *porterly* a man to look on as ever you would desire to see, with fine *perpetrating* eyes, and such a pretty nosé too; I think they called it an *equatile*, or summet like that—he was very troublesome about the Castle too."

"Pshaw!" cried Emily, with a smile of discredit, "do not begin your fanciful stories, my good Margarette. The dear man is too happy, I hope, in a better world, to return to this again; his spirit reposes in peace."

"I seed it, Miss, with my own eyes," said the old woman, nodding her head with meaning, "no later agone than last summer—and seeing is believing. It was a fine night, but rather darkish or so, for indeed its always dark enough in the wood, even in the middle of the day; I left a few things out to bleach on the grass, and just thought on them that mayhap they would be

be *stole* afore morning. Robert was gone to bed, and I did not much like to go by myself, but I plucked up my heart, and went out with a light in my hand; so I huddled up all the things in a terrible hurry, to be sure, when all of a sudden comes a great puff of wind, and out went the lamp, and all the place looked as black as ink. Well, for certain, I *trimbulated* every joint on me, like I don' know what; but all that was nothing to what *camed* after; for I turns about my head, and there, Lord have mercy upon us! I seed, coming along one of the walks, a great tall *summet*, all over in a flame of fire. I was stuck fast to the ground, young ladies, as if I was nailed there, not able to move hand nor foot; my heart thumped so, I thought it would jump out of my mouth—the hair o' my head stood up like pig's *brussels*—and I was all over in a cold *perpetration*, when this great thing comes up close by me, and I *seen*, by its own light, as plain as ever I seed him in his life, the *hapirition* of Mr. Villeroy, wrapt round

round in his winding-sheet. Oh, Lord forgive me! to be sure I'll never forget it; so with that I told over the Lord's prayer as well as I could remember it, (for I hear when a body sees any bad thing, if they *says* that it can't harm 'em) and sure enough it past me by in a blue flame, when it vanished away, and, in a twinkle, there it was in the *ruminous* part of the Castle, and the whole side of the building was *lumerated* afore a living Christian could have time to kindle a match."

"Upon my word," said Emily, with a sagacious shake of her head, "I believe you were perfectly right, Margarette, in your examination of the bleach green, or you might have discovered in the morning, that the ghost had given proof of its *light* qualities, to *confuse*, if not confute, the opinion of its immaterial substance. And pray how did you contrive to get into the Castle with all your overwhelming terrors to clog your speed?"

"Bless you, Miss," answered she, "I know

know no more nor the child *unborned*; but I run into bed when I did, and there I heard 'em the whole live long night over my head, making such a clatter as never was."

"*Them!*" repeated Emily, "I thought you saw but *one*, and even that one, I am apt to believe, not of a nature to fly through the aperture of a key hole, which could have been its only method of entrance, as those rooms I understand are always secured."

"Dear bless us, Miss," cried out Margarette, "why don't you know that them *superanual* creatures can go through every hole and chink of the house, or down the chimbly, or by the ceiling, in the twinkle of an eye. Then there's the old Lord and his Lady, that I have heard myself, many a time, up and down the great stairs, and her fine silks *rusling* along every step she went: and Mrs. Villeroy too—I could swear to her; for many a time I have seen her at my bedside, and she would shake her head so at me,

me. Oh, Lord have mercy on me!" added she putting both her hands together, "to be sure I am terribly *afeard* of her, and no wonder I should."

"Why?" asked Emily; "did you ever injure her, that you should be particularly sensible of her nightly visits?"

"I seed her die, Miss, answered Margarette, who began to appear rather uneasy, "and—and that has left an *oppression* on my mind, I believe."

"That I don't doubt," said Anna; "for I have heard Lady Fitzwalter describe the circumstances attending poor Mrs. Villeroy's death, till my mind has been as deeply impressed, as though I had witnessed it; and you were then, Margarette, one of the attendants belonging to the poor orphans. Ah! had it been Heaven's will to have spared *one* of them, the anguish of that dear woman's suffering bosom had been mitigated, by having still a descendant of her beloved Villeroy's to fill the vacuum his loss created there."

"Poor

"Poor babes!" said Emily, with a sigh, "they soon followed their parents. Had not Lady Fitzwalter been opposed in her wishes, they had probably escaped the fatal termination of that baneful disorder. *They* did not die in the Castle, I think, Margarette?"

"Die!" she repeated, "no, Miss, they did not."

"It was in the Wood-house," said Anna, "as I have heard her Ladyship say."

"The Wood-house, Miss!" re-echoed Margarette, "aye, the poor boy died in the Wood-house, sure enough."

"And the little girl, also?" said Anna.

Margarette was silent a few moments; she seemed to get more uneasy.

"It's so long agone, young ladies," replied she, after some time, "I—I don't well remember it."

"And yet, my good Margarette," said Emily, "you can recollect many circumstances

stances of a much earlier period. Perhaps the *subject* is not very agreeable to you at *this* particular time."

Emily's allusion was to the hour, and the old woman's fears of the peaceful beings they discoursed about.

"Lord bless me, Miss!" cried she, with an expression of extraordinary astonishment, "what do you mean by that? Do you think, that is, do you suppose that I—that I—I——"

"My poor woman," said Emily, "you are terrifying yourself without any cause. What should I think, or suppose, but that you are a great coward, and afraid of your own shadow? I am sure I don't imagine you killed the children, or were any way accessary to their untimely fate."

Margarette's sigh amounted to a groan.

"If it had not been for Lord Fitzwalter," she

she cried, "Oh! if it had not been for him, the dear *children* had been now——"

"Yes," said Anna, hastily interrupting her, "they might have been now alive, and in the enjoyment of the fortune he is so undeserving of."

Margarette did not appear much inclined to farther conversation: the mention of Villeroy's children seemed to produce an unusual specimen of her taciturnity; she became thoughtful and dejected—sighed frequently—and, at times, wiped away a rising tear. The ladies were affected at this silent, yet eloquent, display of her grief, for the memory of the two orphans, whose nurse she had partially been, and forbore any further mention of them; neither did they revert to the subject during their future stay at the Castle, and the old woman as studiously avoided entering on any which could again recall it.

De Courcy was not long absent: he attended

attended Arthur to York, and, seeing him safe in the mail coach, set out the following morning for the Castle. His return was the summons for the party's quitting it, and it was not without a degree of regret they prepared to bid it adieu; they had already been a month there, and the ladies particularly lamented their being obliged to leave its enchanting beauties, at a time when nature put forth her most captivating charms. The trees, rich in verdant foliage, bent their tall branches, as if to meet each other's kiss; the fields exhibited their full bosoms glowing with the ripened grain of harvest; the new-mown hay filled the air with its sweet perfume; and the scented flowers exhaled their sweets in odoriferous fragrance.

"Oh, my Anna!" said De Courcy, as he walked by her side, the evening previous to their departure, "such are the scenes which man's rational sense must enjoy with delight: no baneful pleasure lurks beneath the Creator's benefits, if we have but *reason* to

to guide us in our use of them; the diversified landscape round us awakens, at every view, our admiration and our gratitude; our senses are not palled in the contemplation of his abundant distributions, nor our appetites satiated by partaking of their wholesome produce; God and Nature are plentiful providers; and man's wants are small, when not expanded by luxury. In such a spot, as this present, could I spend my days, with my beloved Anna by my side, to give new charms to each captivating prospect; to hear her expatiate on the boundless perfections which both presented, while her mild voice breathed sweeter accents on her Henry's heart, as his beat consciously of her being for ever his own. That time, my Anna," he proceeded, "will, I fondly hope, arrive, when my claim to your invaluable affections will be established in the face of the world. But, Oh! my beloved Anna, two years—two tedious years must elapse ere that period; and, separated from you, how many events

may arise to destroy my cherished happiness!"

"From me, De Courcy," replied the blushing girl, "you can apprehend none. I have given you my heart—it is your's for ever; you are acquainted with the circumstances of my miserable origin, and have generously annulled that obstacle—yet how many may it raise on the part of him you are bound to obey? Will he so nobly accept, for the wife of his only son, a base-born, fortuneless girl? will he countenance an alliance so abject, merely to indulge the romantic passion of his house's hope? Ah, Henry, never! And you also—may not a two years reflection point out to your maturer judgment the imprudence of persevering in an attachment, which would hereafter disgrace your exalted rank, and to subdue its influence, feel as a duty becoming yourself, no less than to the parent who looks up to you as the future support of his ancient name?"

"From you, Anna," replied De Courcy, "I must

"I must listen to those unkind surmises, and from your lips only could they impress my heart; for, were they to be uttered by any other being, my indignation and my resentment would attend the daring accuser. Were I so fickle by disposition, and so unsettled by principle, my conduct since I have known you, and at this moment, would render me the most contemptible of villains, and justly stamp me a disgrace to my name. The affections of a lovely, elegant, virtuous female, be *her* station in life ever so humble, reflects dignity on a man, however elevated *his* rank; she is an honour to his discernment, and he may with safety confide *his* to her keeping. Therefore, Anna," he continued, "banish these unjust suspicions; for not even a father's authority should, or shall, compel me to resign *my* honour, and my life's dearest hopes, to any ungenerous command he might endeavour to enforce. Were I to urge my suit accordant to my

wishes, it would extend to ensuring you mine, ere I quitted the kingdom; but I do not, Anna; I would not insult the native dignity of your soul, which is to me your most perfect charm, by making a request that would clog your freedom, separated from him on whose account you would then experience ten thousand renumerable anxieties. The woman I solicit as my wife shall be as free as air, till the moment I can publicly make her so, fetters her liberty and mine together."

"Ah, De Courcy!" answered Anna, "then you may, in truth, depend on my faith; I plight it voluntarily to you, nor can any circumstance ever tempt me to a breach of it, unless deserted or forgotten by you; yet, even then, I should feel more regret than resentment at your forsaking me, by attributing it rather to my own unhappy destiny, than to any inconstancy of your nature. Neither shall I, during the term of your absence, consider myself less

less bound by the ties which at this moment unite us, than I would by being already pledged to you at the altar."

"Beloved, O most tenderly-loved Anna!" cried the delighted De Courcy, "your Henry is more than grateful for this precious proof of your esteem, which binds him to you in eternal ties of honour, no less than affection: he can, and will, implicitly confide in that faith by which his own future actions shall be governed. This, my love," added he, "will be our last private conversation, until we again meet to part no more in this life, as we go off to-morrow, and you leave me in Cambridge. Be happy, be content, and be all yourself, during my probationary stay abroad. I will not, my Anna, be meanly jealous of your smiles, whilst conscious I alone occupy your heart. I know you will have many suitors, to contend for a prize exclusively my right; but while you "smile on all alike," I shall not be distrustful of one man, who only shares with all in the sweet

affability of your character. I may envy the friend near you, who enjoys your society, but no doubt will arise in my mind of the *distant* one not being the dearest."

"Be every shadow of doubt removed," said Anna, "and, to effectually doing so, it is necessary I should inform you of a very particular and singular circumstance relating to Arthur and me; hear it, De Courcy, and then give me your opinion."

She went on in describing the effects of her first meeting with him, together with their subsequent one in the peculiar apartment, without concealing or diminishing the slightest particle, and concluded with an acknowledgment of the lasting impression he had made on her mind.

De Courcy listened with the most profound attention, unmixed with any fearful apprehensions of an invasion of his own rights, and appeared to consider it as an event

event attached to some most extraordinary conclusion.

"I am thankful to you, my Anna," said he, after a few moments consideration, "for this mark of your confidence, which too probably had given me uneasiness, if revealed through a chance medium only; but, by *your* own information, cannot alarm me with any apprehensions of a rival. No, Anna, you are too generously sincere to raise my doubts, and Arthur too noble a character to suspect him of a design to supplant me in your affections; and your little narrative is replete with so astonishing a coincidence of natural emotions, that I am of opinion the ties of consanguinity could *alone* have created them—but, be their source from what cause it may, your interested wishes attach me stronger to his future welfare, and gives him, from this moment, a warmer claim to my friendship."

Anna felt her mind tranquil and composed, now that this interview with De Courcy had explained every equivocal sentiment on both sides; every thought of her heart was laid before him, and be the termination as it would, she had not to accuse herself of any deception or concealment, with which he could hereafter reproach her. His long absence she was prepared against, as knowing it unavoidable; but she was firm in a belief of his honour, as he was in a certainty of her's—and, convinced within her own bosom of the sincerity of her attachment for him, she had no fears for her future conduct ever awaking his suspicions, or creating his jealousy; it had always been uniformly correct, and her promised faith to him would preserve it decidedly strict.

The following morning found the *partie quarré*, at an early hour, assembled in the parlour, attired in their travelling dresses, preparatory to the commencement of their journey.

journey. The good hoary-headed steward of the Castle stood at a distance, looking at them while at breakfast, with a mute expression of regret for their departure strongly marked on his honest countenance. Emily felt a kind of reverence for this faithful old servant, and Anna no less respected him.

"Have you any message to send to Lady Fitzwalter, my good Robert?" asked the latter, kindly directing her looks to him as she spoke; "I will deliver it faithfully, if you have, and her Ladyship will, I am certain, receive it kindly."

"I thank your Honour," replied the old man, bowing to her—"I do indeed, Madam; and since you are so good, please to tell my dear, dear Lady, that her faithful old servant can never forget that her Ladyship was *here*, the delight of all eyes, and the happiness of all hearts; and that the poor remains of the once comfortable tenants of Eure Castle bless her name, and pray for

her daily."—The good creature wiped his eyes.—" Ah! why should they not?" continued he, after a short pause. " Whilst Lady Fitzwalter was in it, they had every comfort they could wish, or her Ladyship could give them; she is gone, but her goodness and her charities will ever bring her to recollection. Tell her," added he, " that old Robert ventures to present her, through you, young lady, his humble respects; the blessing of a well-meaning heart her Ladyship will not be offended at, and her old servant gives her his on his knees."—The poor man bent his, and with honest fervour continued—" O may every blessing, both here and hereafter, attend her—may her own heart feel the happiness she gives to her fellow-creatures—may she forget her past sorrows and afflictions in this world—and, before she quits it, may peace and joy follow her through a long life, and give her an everlasting happiness in the next. And, Oh my God!" added this worthy creature, " if it be your gracious

cious will, grant that I may, once more, see my beloved Lady, and then I care not how soon it is your pleasure to call me."

Emily and Anna flew to raise the old man—their eyes were suffused with tears. He kissed a hand of each respectfully.

"Heaven bless you both, young ladies," said he; "may ye be as good as Lady Fitzwalter, and you need not desire to be better."

"Dear, worthy Robert," cried Emily, "I respect you from my soul. Lady Fitzwalter loves you, and I find you fully deserving of it."

"And something seems to tell me *here*," said he, laying his hand on his breast, "as if it just now whispered me, that I will see my dear Lady again. I am a poor old man, but I think the sight of her would renew, as it were, my days; and, if they did not kill me, I would be, once more, a happy creature."

Lord de Courcy was a generous and a charitable man, notwithstanding his being somewhat vain of his noble family; but there are few without their peculiar foibles, and this was his Lordship's most prominent one. "God bless you, my good man," cried he, shaking the hand of Robert most cordially, which was a distinguished mark of his Lordship's esteem, "God bless you, my good man, you are a faithful worthy fellow." At the moment he, unobserved, put ten guineas into his hand, and taking his hat, left the room, saying he would return in a few minutes; and they observed him take the avenue leading to the deserted village, with quick and hasty steps.

The words of Robert, respecting Lady Fitzwalter's bounty to the poor tenants, some of whom were most sensible of her loss, strongly impressed the mind of Lord de Courcy. The unhappy residue of the people she had so nobly protected, were now in distress. They had experienced comfort

comfort under her protection; and the comparison of their present with their former situation, aggravated each affliction, and rendered their wretchedness more acute. So true it is, that those who are thrown, by the vicissitudes of adverse fortune, from a state of comfort and content, feel the miseries of their reverse with more acute sensations than those born to struggle for subsistence, who toil on through life without experiencing a wish beyond their scanty means. The evolutions of the blind goddess's wheel may, in a moment, plunge the respectable family from happiness to misery—from plenty to penury; and does the calamity fall on those who rank nearest the *first* class, how accumulated its weight! from affluence they are at once disgraced, for what can be more disgraceful than *poverty*, in the estimation of the wealthy?—The rich profligate, who whirls in the ring a coach and four, is followed, courted, and caressed, while virtu-

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ous indigence, parading a-foot, is past unnoticed, even by many of those persons who have, probably, flattered them at their own table, or danced away the convivial hours to the enlivening sounds of their ball-room. The table no longer displays the enticing repast, the cheerful notes vibrate in sighs of anguish, and the flowing tear silences the chord of harmony in the sorrowing bosom: The polite guest forgets the cordial host—the fluttering visitor disappears—and the dear intimate ceases to remember his *beloved* friend. Oh! what a profanation of the sacred term! Friendship, which can expand beneath the sunshine of prosperity, but evaporates as the illusions of a gay dream, when adversity would seek, of its affluent abilities, some alleviation to its wants, leaving but the vapoury recollection to trace its past promises; and like the fleeting vision which torpid imagination brings, their eyes open to the delusions of fancy, and the hopes they believe within

within their grasp, fades from the view, and are seen no more.

Lady Fitzwalter was not aware of the progressive desolation that had attended her favourite village, from the time she quitted its environs. Misfortune had not so much blunted the keen edge of her benevolent heart, but her thoughts often reverted to it and its peaceable inhabitants; but she firmly believed that Lord Fitzwalter still preserved its happy state; that the tenants were, as usual, employed in honest labour, cultivating their own little household comforts, and working on the extensive grounds annexed to the domain; all of which judging to be the case, her Ladyship rested satisfied of these people still enjoying a decent livelihood.

Alas! how would Lady Fitzwalter's generous bosom have been disturbed, had she known the real state of her beloved hamlet, and the reduction of its inhabi-

tants, with the total deprivation of the blessings she had so lavishly bestowed!—How severe had been her accusations of Lord Fitzwalter, did she understand that through his unjust reports she had been led to overlook a more accurate enquiry, which her private sorrows had not otherwise prevented—that, through his means, distress had trod in the footsteps of neglect, and desolation overthrown the cottages raised by benevolence, as the sheltering roof for industry to repose in!

Lord de Courcy directed his course towards the village, meditating, as he walked hastily forwards, on the words of Robert, and the noble qualities of her who called forth his enthusiastic praises; and to mitigate the wants of those poor people, whom her Ladyship had formerly cherished, was now his Lordship's purpose. Lady Fitzwalter he respected for her virtues, and esteemed for her benevolent principles; and these sentiments were connected with one

one of a more tender nature, which his Lordship had, in secret, felt for her, when, in her brighter days, she was no less an object of universal admiration, from the personal beauty with which she was so highly gifted.

His Lordship was then a widower, and had certainly made proposals for the hand of Miss Villeroy, if Lord Fitzwalter had not intervened, and, unfortunately for herself, become master of the prize. Unfortunately indeed! for had Lord de Courcy been the fortunate attainer, the afflictions she was decreed to meet had been mitigated, by the tender attentions of a man of nicest honour.

His Lordship entered one of the wretched hovels, or rather sheds, of the village, where he beheld a woman of languid appearance, leaning over the crackling embers of a fire of dried sticks, as she mixed a pottage for the family's breakfast, while a couple

couple of half naked and half famished looking children clung fast by her side, watching with eager eyes the slender nutriment, and anxious for its being set before them. A man of dejected mien sat near, whose wistful countenance was likewise directed to the poor contents of the little iron pot, into which he alternately dipped an old horn spoon, to feed a poor squalid infant boy that sat on his knee. The man rose instantly on his Lordship's entrance, knowing him to be one of the great gentlefolks at the Castle; and the woman, taking the child, wiped an old wooden chair with the corner of her apron, which she respectfully placed near him.

Lord de Courcy sat down.

"You were going to breakfast, my good people," said he, "and I have disturbed you."

"Noa, your Honour," replied the man, "we be'nt a while; mistress be only boiling

ing the mess or soa. It wo'na be ready a bit yet, master."

"How many families are there living (starving he might have said) in the village here?" asked his Lordship.

"Why, please your Honour," answered the man, "there be no more now nor four, with ours, that makes five; all the t'others be gone away a long while agone. First, there be Giles Harwood; then Tummas Claxy; and then——"

"Aye, aye," cried his Lordship, "I don't want to know their names. I am in great haste; but if the heads, that is the master or mistress of those families, be near at hand, call them all here; I have something to say to you all together."

"Yes, your Honour," replied he; "I'll run and gi em a call; they be all within, just cum home from work, to get a bit o' breakfast."

Away went the man, and Lord de Courcy entered into conversation with his wife.

"Are

"Are these children all yours, my poor woman? asked he.

"Yes they be, your Honour," she answered, "an poor enow they be too, for certain. Since the Lady o' the Castle went from this, we be all desolated an' undone."

"Do you remember Lady Fitzwalter?" demanded his Lordship.

"That I does, please your Honour," replied she. "I was at oame wi faythcr, over there, in that cottage, an' a neatish place it was too. My Lady comed every day to see we was all doing well; an' she had so little pride over her, that she'd sit down just like your Honour now, and kiss the little children as if they was her own equals. Then there was never so many o' them pretty cottages a both sides o' the road, an' her Ladyship would go into 'em all, one after t'other, and ax after the neighbours so kindly. She was a good Lady, an' we'll never see her likes again, nor the fine times we had when she was with us."

The poor woman appeared to feel the loss generally sustained by Lady Fitzwalter's absence; for she sighed as she delivered her rustic address, and wiped her eyes in the little boy's tattered frock, as she held him in her arms.

"Well, my good woman," said his Lordship, "don't despair; things will turn out better than what you expect, for Lady Fitzwalter has not forgot her village friends, though she did not know much they required her assistance, or you would not have been so badly off, I promise you."

"Noa, that we wouldn't, I warrant," cried she; "an' so I said a hundred times over. For my Lady was so good to every body, that I was pretty certain she wouldn't let her own poor people go to starve, an God knoas, your Honour, us hereabouts be little better. Only the old man at the Castle do gi us all every *crismas* an' easter times, a whole sheep, out o' his own pocket, in honour o' his dear late Lord, an' we never

never gets a bit o' *substantious victals,* but o' them there times."

"He does!" cried Lord de Courcy, slapping his cane on the earthen floor; "Robert does that!—by the Lord he's an honour to man, and if I survive him, damn me but he shall have a statue erected to his memory in Oakly Park, on a pedestal, eighty feet high."

Lord de Courcy never said ny thing that he did not intend adhering to; therefore if his Lordship did outlive the worthy old steward, his memory was most indubitably honoured with this memento of his virtues.

The man at the cottage shortly appeared, followed by those persons he went to seek, who made as forlorn an appearance as he did himself, to whom his Lordship put some necessary questions, and their replies pourtrayed, together with their looks, a concise statement of their present wretchedness.

"I am

"I am commissioned by your former benefactress," said his Lordship, when they had ceased speaking, "Lady Fitzwalter, to enquire into the situation of this village, and its inhabitants, which her Ladyship believed to be very different from what it is, and to relieve your necessities according to their wants, which I find are great and numerous; therefore the first thing to be done, is to get your habitations made comfortable, which must be set about immediately, and the venerable steward of the Castle will oversee the works, to have them properly done, and also defray the expences. Here," added he, "are ten guineas, sent by her Ladyship for each family, to procure some little decent clothing for them, and assist in forwarding your industry, which it is impossible you could continue, without some means of getting whatever is wanted to promote your different employments. And, during the fine weather, the children who are able must be sent to the nearest school,

school, until such times as this place affords a better prospect; as I can answer for it, that when your Lady understands what state it is in, she will exert herself towards restoring it to its former one. All expences for the children's schooling, Robert will be answerable for; and until your grievances are redressed, you will each family receive the same sum of ten guineas every year."

A general shout of thanks and rejoicing ran through the group. They blessed their dear Lady a thousand times, and said they were once again happy under her protection. They returned their grateful and unsophisticated acknowledgments to his Honour for the kindness he shewed them, in the delivery of her Ladyship's commands, and begged he would take their blessing and their thanks to their dear worthy mistress, for all her past and present goodness to them; and finally, accompanied Lord de Courcy back to the entrance of the wood,

wood, following him at a respectful distance, with every demonstration of honest joy, till, at his request, they parted from him there, and returned, with light hearts, to talk over their sudden and unexpected happiness. Had they known it was to his Lordship's own benevolence they were indebted for this fortunate change, how unbounded had been their gratitude to him, who, as a stranger, sought to relieve their oppressions! But, with a delicacy only known to a truly generous mind, he acted from the principles he was convinced Lady Fitzwalter possessed, and gave to her the whole merit of an act which originated entirely through himself, from her Ladyship's ignorance of its being requisite. His Lordship invested Robert with full power to proceed in this business, according to his own ideas of what was necessary, and gave him fifty pounds, to commence the arrangements spoken of, with orders to draw on him for whatever money was wanted for compleating them satisfactorily.

Our party bade adieu to the solemn shades of Eure Castle, regretting and regretted by its two solitary inmates. Margarette was very seriously concerned, not only for losing the two young ladies' society, who had obtained the old woman's good regards by their condescension, and allowing her to use her tongue without restraint, whenever she pleased, but also from the apprehensions she entertained of the supernatural visitants becoming more troublesome than before, through the late infringement on their deserted abodes, which, by disturbing them then, would, she was persuaded, render them more refractory hereafter. She was in hopes, however, that the gentlefolks would return there the ensuing summer, and bring with them her dear boy, Arthur, for whom she seemed more interested than any other being, praying more fervently than ever she did in her life, (except when a delivery from the ghosts brought forth some devout exclamation) that he might come back

back safe from the wild *beastesses* abroad, and all the *barbarage jesobels* in outlandish parts.

As De Courcy was to quit the party at Cambridge, they took a different route returning, to what they had come, proceeding through Lincolnshire, at the capital of which they halted a day or two, to take a view of whatever places were worthy of note, in particular the cathedral, which is raised on a lofty eminence, and seen at an immense distance. It was considered, in monkish times, as the noblest building ever erected, who taught the people to credit that the devil regarded it with envy, which occasioned a proverb, still used when an evil-minded person sees another's better prosperity—namely, that "he looks like the devil over Lincoln." But there are many superior edifices to it at present; the greatest curiosities being the windows, and a bell commonly known by the appellation of Great Tom, which would contain

four hundred and twenty-four gallons, liquid measure, and wherein a man could stand upright with ease. It is suspended by itself in a wooden steeple, and is *never* rung, nor tolled, but on very particular occasions.

They entered Cambridge at an early hour, which afforded them an opportunity of seeing its beauties to advantage. The river Cam flowing through a number of handsome bridges, like a winding canal; the extensive colleges, surrounded with groves and gardens, presented to them a scene of exquisite beauty; and when these noble structures were considered as the foundation of science and learning, every charm was heightened at recollecting how many great and worthy characters had therein pursued their studies, to shine forth as ornaments of their country.

Here De Courcy parted from his friends and his beloved Anna, who he was not again

again to meet during a long period; he was very much agitated as he pressed her hand, leading her to the coach: but not wishing to betray his emotions in presence of his father, he endeavoured to suppress them as much as possible, accounting for what was visible, to his concern at being obliged to bid his agreeable friends a long farewell. Anna experienced as trembling a sensation, but was yet more cautious against betraying it, which must, inevitably, have created the suspicions of Lord de Courcy. Emily observed both, and assuming a graver air than she felt, said—

"I don't know whether to laugh or weep at taking my leave of you, De Courcy.—Did I the latter, it would betray a pusillanimity very unbecoming the heroine who so magnanimously encountered the *shades* of Eure Castle, and you must certainly allow me the merit of boldly defying their lowering aspect, at all hours."

Emily's pun created a smile, and it was replied to by De Courcy, in similar terms.

"Indeed, Emily," he said, "we must acknowledge that your superior *assistants* chased away the vapoury visitors of the Castle, for all bad spirits evaporated, when opposed by your powerful and good ones."

"And yet I don't know but I should rejoice," replied she, "at our fortunate escape, particularly at the return of our valiant knight champion to scientific ground, with his appetite sharpened by the pure northern breezes, to attack a dry classical olio, without the danger of indigestion."

"You see," cried De Courcy, "nothing can disperse your spirits; whilst your volatiles are at hand, your friends may defy every attack made on their nervous system at least: They apply with such efficacy, that we should vainly seek in the Doctor or Divine a more powerful repellant to our bodily or ghostly enemies."

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They waved their adieus to each other as the coach drove off; and the two ladies, with their worthy guardian, proceeded, without further delay, to Deventon, where their return was greeted by the expecting friends assembled together to welcome them, and hear the wonders of Eure Castle related.

No person felt more happy at their arrival than did the drooping Lady Fitzwalter. In the absence of her sweet young friends, she had many tedious and heavy hours, which even the kind attentions of Mrs. Grenville could not relieve; but now they were returned, she experienced the sole comfort she could look forward to with hope, their society and conversation. Anna gave into her Ladyship's hands the packet she had brought from the Castle; Lady Fitzwalter kissed and dropped a tear over it, but she had no thoughts of examining into it then, and carefully deposited it in a drawer of her cabinet.

Lord de Courcy did not stay beyond the next morning at Deventon, when he set out for London; and as he was going he gave a most particular charge to Anna and Emily that they would be silent on the subject of Arthur; he had strong reasons for his injunctions, which they would, probably, be acquainted with at a future period: the young ladies promised to obey it, and every circumstance relating to the elegant peasant remained a secret to the assembly at Deventon, except the two persons who were already acquainted with it.

Anna witnessed, with the deepest regret, a visible change for the worse, in the appearance of her dearly beloved patron, Mr. Jeffries. He had been ill during her absence, but he would not allow it to be mentioned in any letter, to make her unhappy. He did not then feel himself in immediate danger, therefore hoped she would be returned ere there was any ne-

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cessity for alarming her; his hope was accomplished, for he got better; but not many days after she had come home, this good and admirable man relapsed, and he felt his dissolution approach. He met the awful moment without fear, for he had walked in the path of his God. He had not lived for himself alone; he had lived for the service of his fellow creatures; he had not hoarded up wealth for his own use merely; he had amassed it with honour, and he dispensed it for their benefit.

Anna knelt by him, at one side of the bed, her inseparable friend Emily near her, and the poor afflicted wife, his dear companion of many years, suspended her aged head over him at the opposite side.

"Weep not, my beloved friends," weakly uttered the expiring saint; "weep not for me. I am serene, tranquil, and resigned: I have humbly endeavoured to obey the

commandments of the gracious God who is summoning me before him. I have hoped in his mercy and truth, and he does not forsake me in this awful hour. I feel as if sinking into a heavenly slumber: my soul, hovering in its fragile habitation, turns to the Divine Being who created it, as the source of its eternal bliss. My mind clear and comprehensive, my body free of pain, ought you not to rejoice, my dearest friends, that after being permitted to enjoy in this world a course of years beyond the general allotment of man, in health and in peace, the Almighty Giver opens to my view his mercies, in the serenity of my departing moments? The last moments of an honest man is the commencement of his everlasting happiness. Be it your study, my children, to live well, and you will not fear to die; mind your duty to *Him*, before whom you must appear, and your religion will instruct you in your duties to the world; and when, like me, you are called before his tribunal, you will not

shrink before the leveller of all worldly distinction, or tremble to receive the fiat of your eternal Judge. May your last moments be like mine, and you will say, as I do now—"O death! where is thy sting? —O grave! where is thy victory?"

The good man ceased. His words sunk deeply to the hearts of his surrounding friends, but they could not dry up the tears that were shed for his loss. The beloved old partner of fifty happy years, pressed the damp hand of her dying companion to her pale lips.

"We will not be long separated, my love," she tremblingly articulated. "My sand has not far to run, and I trust we shall meet again in a better world, never, never to part more."

"Give me your blessing, my friend, my father," cried the sobbing Anna; "you have been both to me, and as the blessing of a parent, it will attend me through life."

"I do, my Anna, from my soul," ejaculated he, growing every moment weaker. "My fleeting spirit turns back to bless you as my child; when I am gone, you will find I have considered you as such: and you, Emily, the friend of Anna's earliest days, receive it also. Dry up your tears, my dear girls, to comfort this dear afflicted mourner, (to his weeping wife) and be you, my Anna, as you have ever been, the kind and tender daughter to her."

The servants crowded round the bed, to partake of the good man's last benediction. Mrs. Glynn and William, who had grown old in his service, stood foremost in melancholy expression of genuine sorrow. He raised his feeble hand—

"Bless you all!" His hand dropped on the sheet, his head sunk deeper on the pillow, his voice faltered—"Heaven opens to my view—I come, my God, to thee—to thee, my God:" A hectic passed his cheek—

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his eyes closed—and the worthy, virtuous, pious Mr. Jeffries, resigned his soul to the merciful Being he called on.

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The will of Mr. Jeffries was opened two days after his decease: Mr. Grenville and a neighbouring gentleman were the executors. It gave to his widow all the personal effects, together with eight hundred a-year during her life, which was to revert, after her death, to a charity, for the maintenance and support of a stated number of orphan boys and girls, for the foundation of which he bequeathed two thousand pounds, and the building of the house to commence within three months after his demise. To every servant and tenant he ordered a year's wages, and a year's rent; and to the old housekeeper and butler, fifty pounds each, over and above, with a request that they might be kept in the service of either Mrs. Jeffries or Anna, during their lives: And

And he directed that every poor family round Deventon should attend his funeral, and to each person, man, woman, and child, to be given the day after it, the sum of five shillings. His dependants and pensioners were provided for, according to their wants; and to every individual that formed the circle in Deventon House, he bequeathed a token of remembrance. To Anna, the person who resided in his house, who had been brought up by him and his wife, and whom he considered in the dear light of a child, known by the name of Anna Jeffries, he left six hundred a-year, during life, and to commence from the day of his decease, which, if she married and had children, was to descend to them; but if not, was to revert to the use of some charitable purpose that she would appoint. Likewise to the said Anna, the further sum of twenty thousand pounds, at her own and sole disposal, from the day she attained the age of one and twenty; and in case of any sickness, or danger of life, before she

she arrived at that period, the will or paper she should make or sign, for the bequest of it, should hold good.

"Oh, my benefactor," exclaimed Anna, "you have, indeed, considered me as your child. Sacred be thy ashes, and revered thy memory, who, living and dead, was to me a parent."

She knelt at the feet of Mrs. Jeffries.—"To you, to you, my first friend, I can only express my acknowledgments," continued she. "To know its extent, you should behold the heart of Anna: the memory of my benefactor is embalmed there, the name of Jeffries indelibly impressed, and when my soul takes its flight to the blessed mansions his has winged to, the characters will be found imprinted there, stamped with gratitude's avowing seal."

Anna was now an opulent heiress; but all her wealth did not compensate for the loss of the beloved bestower of it—the inesti-

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mable friend who had cherished and supported her—she mourned for him in the sincerity of grief, and her sables were the unaffected semblance of what she felt. In her Mrs. Jeffries experienced the sole mitigation to her affliction, at losing so fond and tender a friend; she did not expect or desire to survive him long; and now that Anna was placed in a situation to defy the future frowns of fortune, and in the care of a worthy guardian during her minority, Mr. Grenville, although he had no absolute command over her, but in the charge of the second large bequest, and surrounded with kind friends, Mrs. Jeffries had no other attachment to life; she set about discharging her husband's last commands, with composure, and tolerable cheerfulness, in the observance of his orders, in which she was assisted by Anna; and that dear girl exerted every gentle talent to dispense happiness over the future hours of her benefactress's life. The family at Deventon likewise shared in their endeavours

endeavours to restore serenity to the good old lady's bosom; and she did not refuse their attentions: she joined in the society; she partook of their friendly amusements; but her thoughts still turning to the loved friend that was gone before her, and to the same journey she was herself fast approaching, she considered her compliance to their kind wishes but as a duty she owed for their generous intentions, and submitted to their friendly endeavours, whilst she awaited her own last summons with humility and hope.

In the course of this melancholy proceeding, Lord de Courcy had arrived in London, where Arthur, safe landed at his Lordship's house, waited for his coming with impatience. A change was soon made in the outward appearance of the youth, which when done, Lord de Courcy was not ashamed to be seen walking Bond-street, or St. James's-street, leaning on his young friend's arm, trotting in the ring with

with him by his side, and presenting him to all his acquaintances, as the favourite of his son, and a young gentleman going to travel with him. Arthur had soon a number of followers, which the suavity of his manners made friends; and who, had he been inclined, would have soon initiated him into the dissipated ways of dashing life; but he had no desire to be instructed in them, and declined every invitation which was not acceptable to his patron; and this conduct highly pleased Lord de Courcy, who, in consequence of it, took him with him to every place he went himself, unless when a particular invitation excluded the possibility of introducing a stranger.

The equipment of Arthur for his travelling pursuits was such as the son of a gentleman would be entitled to. Every necessary article was attentively looked into, and provided by his Lordship, who, had Arthur been his own younger son, he could not

not have more correctly studied. The allowance of De Courcy was, of course, proportionable to his rank and his fortune; but all the expences of their journey was to be attended to by the gentleman who went as his tutor, the Reverend Doctor Barclay; therefore, the money allotted, yearly, during that period, to the two young gentlemen, was for their own disposal, to expend as they pleased; and for which Lord de Courcy gave Arthur two hundred a-year, during his being with his son.

By this generosity, his Lordship rendered him entirely independant of his travelling friend, De Courcy; unless how far his own liberality chose to extend, which the father had not a doubt would be adequate to the young man's deserts, and the attachment his son so warmly evinced for him.

De Courcy, shortly after, made his appearance at his father's, accompanied by the worthy

worthy and respectable Doctor Barclay, who was, in every respect, qualified to receive the important charge committed to his care. He was rather rigid in his principles, yet not too severely so, for he allowed to youth an agreeable relaxation from study, when that liberty was not too freely indulged; but where it was abused, the Doctor knew how to reprove and punish it. He was a scholar and a gentleman, and as a divine, an exemplary character.—Under the guardianship of such a preceptor, our two youths could not fail of meeting the improvement and knowledge they set out to seek; and so amenable in their own dispositions, he had not to apprehend for any reflection on his conduct through that of his pupils; they promised to be an honour to him: and the business being finally arranged, our young gentlemen bid adieu to the good Lord de Courcy, and commenced their peregrination—which, happy in the society of each other, we shall leave them to pursue, till their

their arrival in a distant country will admit of some novelty for us to run after them.

CHAP. VI.

"Perhaps kind Heaven in mercy dealt the blow,
Some saving truth thy roving soul to teach."

SHAW.

MANY months had passed since Lord de Courcy and his young friends paid their visit to Eure Castle, and that Anna had given to Lady Fitzwalter the papers she brought from thence, which, however fondly wishing to peruse, her Ladyship dreaded a scrutiny that would open afresh all

all the wounds of her sad bosom. Yet could she but summon fortitude enough to undertake the task, how dear, though melancholy, how poignant, but how sweet, would be her feelings, as tracing the precious remnants of Villeroy's affection, they would tell her how tenderly it had been her's! They would tell her such things had been, but now gone by, like a summer's cloud, which, alas! no returning season could give back to her. Yet still she hesitated, still trembled at her own fragile nature; and day after day postponed it, as if prejudging to receive from their affecting perusal an accumulation of woe she was little able to encounter. Anna, to whom she communicated her wishes, tenderly offered to read over these letters to her; but this proposal was as gratefully declined, her Ladyship fearing to wound the gentle bosom of her sweet young friend, by witnessing a renewal of her sorrows, which she was aware of their giving rise to, and which, in the unrestrained indulgence of,

of, she believed the effect would be less painful.

How frequently was the packet taken up and looked at, blistered with the falling tear, and laid down, while irresolute and apprehensive, the trembling fingers of the agitated, unhappy Lady Fitzwalter, durst not venture to break its seal. The seal too bore the crest and cypher of Villeroy; it was one Arthur had found in the writing table, along with some other materials of that kind, and had used it in securing the packet; but this was a circumstance of which her Ladyship was ignorant: she only remembered having had such an impression, and the sight of it brought to her mind the recollection of having left it, with some writing implements, behind her at the Castle, where she concluded Anna had found and made use of it in this purpose, and wished now that she had also brought it to her. But Anna had not, in fact, noticed it at the time, nor until her Ladyship

Ladyship pointed it out to her, when she merely said she had returned it to the place she had found it, after its being used to seal the envelope.

No mention having ever been made to Lady Fitzwalter of Arthur, she could not divine that his hand had stamped the impression, or that the seal she so much wished for was now in his possession: He had put it into his pocket that night without a thought, and there it had remained, till on a discovery of his theft, he was many miles from the Castle, and no longer in his power to return it.

While the mind of Lady Fitzwalter wavered in uncertainty, a letter, announcing the unexpected and unlooked for return of Lord Fitzwalter to the Lodge, at once determined her. His Lordship had been absent nearly nine months, and mentioned his coming now to stop some time with her, and would arrive in a day or *two*.—

Her

Her Ladyship was astonished at his intention, and as surprised at his condescension, though, were a judgment to be formed, from Lord Fitzwalter's general conduct, this could not be attributed to any honourable motive, and therefore could not, to his Lady, be any intelligence to give her satisfaction. The truth was, his Lordship had heard something of the late party to Eure Castle; and came off to learn some particular intelligence (we suppose) of a place he had not been in himself so long a time. Lady Fitzwalter thought that if she neglected indulging her melancholy wish of looking over the contents of the packet, before his Lordship's arrival, the uncertainty of how long he would remain at the Lodge, might delay it to a great extent of time, as she would not like him to meet her ever mourning over past griefs, and dear relatives, which, she was well convinced, he was insensible to, and indifferent, if not hateful, of; and therefore collecting her resolution, to fortify her mind,

if possible, against too acutely feeling its sensibilities. She, to prepare an antidote to counteract its possible consequences, dispatched a note to Emily Grenville, requesting she would call on her in the course of two hours, when, retiring to her dressing-room, her Ladyship took from her escritore the dearly-prized packet, and, without further deliberation, broke open the seal.

A fatality seemed to attend Lady Fitzwalter, in her former deliberation and present employment, which she had deferred, through its destiny, to this moment; for, ere one hour had elapsed, Lord Fitzwalter galloped up to the Lodge, attended by a single groom, and entered the house, without the servants being apprised of his arrival, till he rung to enquire for her Ladyship. The man replied to where she was, and his Lordship was ascending the stairs, as a piercing shriek issued from the chamber he was directing his steps to, attended by the fall of some weight; he redoubled

redoubled his speed, and rushed into the room to learn the occasion of these alarming symptoms. Here his Lordship remained a considerable length of time, and until that appointed for Emily's coming, who arrived with Anna at the instant that the bell from above stairs rung with a fury nearly to tear it from its fastenings, and summoned the terrified domestics to its instantaneous reply. Emily and Anna flew, with equal avidity, towards the chamber of Lady Fitzwalter; but, ah! what a sight presented to them? Her Ladyship reclined in a chair, resting her head on the shoulder of Lord Fitzwalter, on whose countenance was strongly depicted, horror, consternation, and confusion, as he appeared to struggle against the passions, which worked his frame in trembling spasms. Her Ladyship represented the ghastly figure of death; her face was pale, as the marble that tells the mouldering ashes beneath it—her lips bloodless—her eyes closed—her hands dropped nerveless—and not a pulse or

movement gave to the appalled beholders a hope of life's ever reanimating her senseless form.

Anna threw herself on her knees before the motionless figure of her friend: she called on her name—she addressed her by every tender appellation; but, alas! Lady Fitzwalter was insensible to the sweet voice which never before had failed to interest her. She pressed her cold hands to her bosom, and strove to restore by it its warmth; but the frigid damp chilled to the heart of Anna, and nearly subdued its own trembling faculties, as she witnessed her fruitless efforts, and contemplated the pale, senseless form, of the best and most respected of women, which pourtrayed the spirit fled its mortal tenement.

"Run! haste!" cried Lord Fitzwalter, "to Exeter for Doctor Hastings; your Lady is dying."

"If not dead already!" cried Emily, mournfully.

mournfully.—"Oh, Lord Fitzwalter! from whence arises all this melancholy business?"

Emily Grenville detested Lord Fitzwalter: his name was odious to her—his sight hateful. She had not art enough to conceal her dislike of him, nor policy, though in his house, to keep in her own breast the suspicions this scene gave rise to, of his unkindness having produced it.

"My unexpected arrival, I imagine," replied his Lordship to her, "has been the occasion of alarming Lady Fitzwalter, and throwing her into a fainting fit."

"Your arrival, my Lord!" said she, looking stedfastly at him, "she was prepared for it—you yourself intimated it; and, come when you would, she was aware of it at one time or other—therefore this dreadful state of her Ladyship could not originate in *that* cause, but must have been effected by no common one."

"Upon my word, Madam," replied his

Lordship, with a sarcastic sneer, "you appear to be a young lady of peculiar penetration, and can, I dare say, divine the cause more accurately than I can pretend to inform you."

Emily directed her looks to him, with a stronger expression of contempt than respect exhibited on them.

"I believe you, my Lord," said she; "for I should probably divine with more truth than you would like to inform me."

Lord Fitzwalter trembled, either with passion or self-conviction; but his eye glanced indignantly over the undaunted Emily, as he hesitatingly pronounced—"I —I should be sorry to insult a lady in my own house; but the honour you presume to impeach——"

"Ah!" cried Emily, interrupting him with quickness, "let honour answer for itself; the neglected, deserted Lady Fitzwalter will reply fully to your's."

"Damnation!" muttered his Lordship, between

between his teeth, "can a woman's prattle discompose me? But beware, Madam," said he, aloud, and approaching Emily with a menacing look, "beware, Madam, how you blast my name; it is not to be sported with by the babbling of a girl."

She met his threatening gestures with a steady, though indignant, brow.

"There is no occasion," cried she, emphatically, "for me to blow the trumpet your Lordship sounds yourself so loudly through the world."

Emily had given vent to the spleen of her heart, by letting his Lordship know how contemptibly she considered him, and how very little better he was thought of by the world; his indignation or his resentment she despised, as much as she did himself—and had he even been so actuated by both, as to command her to withdraw from the Lodge, she would have refused

him at such a moment as this, and courageously opposed his threats or his mandate, while the life of his amiable, unhappy wife continued thus fearfully doubtful. He however saved her the trouble of exerting her spirited talents, by leaving her decidedly the victor, and quitting the field himself, which he not only did, but the house shortly after, thus expressing his open contempt for the world's opinion, by flying from the place where the injured Lady Fitzwalter was supposed to be fast fleeting from the miseries and afflictions of her woe-fraught existence.

She was placed on a couch, where every effort was exerted to restore animation, and call back the current of life to her bloodless veins; but all was essayed in vain, not a spark of reviving life was to be perceived, and they could only judge her not dead by the pliability of her fingers.

A second messenger had followed the first to

to Exeter, and a third dispatched for Mrs. Grenville, who answered it instantly in person, and to her horror of the scene she beheld, was added Emily's account of Lord Fitzwalter's appearance and sudden retreat, not concealing her own indignant behaviour to him, from her strong suspicion of something in his recent conduct having operated thus dreadfully on Lady Fitzwalter, which, joined to his former conduct, roused her to assert the wrongs of his deeply-injured wife, and convince him his character was completely known to her Ladyship's friends round Deventon.

Mrs. Grenville condemned her daughter for suffering the warmth of her resentment to subdue her better reason.

"For however Lord Fitzwalter's conduct merits the censure of the world, Emily," said her mother, "it was not for you, my love, to arraign it; his own heart will tell him, when perhaps too late, that he slighted

the happiness an earthly angel could have given him, and destroyed, by his unkindness, the bruised, sensitive plant, which his tenderness might have revived to its original beauty."

"That I was wrong, my dear mother," replied Emily, "your maturer judgment convinces me; yet I acknowledge the invincible hatred I bear him, and were he again in my presence, again would my indignant soul rise to contemn the wretch, on whose countenance 'villain' was marked in legible characters, while the form of hypocrisy supported the senseless figure of her whose life, I fear, he has destroyed. O, my dear mother," she continued, "could I paint his looks at that moment, I would represent him as the fell fiend of man, when exulting over fallen innocence; he brought sin and death into the world, and the wily serpent, triumphing in its fall, grinned the malice of his infernal deeds, as he fled from the presence of the approaching angel."

"Your

"Your expressions are forcible, Emily," said Mrs. Grenville; "but guard, my love, against betraying them to the poor suffering being, who may soon be an angel in heaven, as she has been a meek and humble one on earth."

Doctor Hastings was shortly after announced, and every other thought was suspended, as the anxious and alarmed friends of Lady Fitzwalter waited to hear his opinion of her.

The Doctor was a good and humane man, exclusive of his being a skilful one in his medical capacity; but he had a very particular method of delivering, or rather repeating over his words, and principally his monosyllables, which made his conversation, at times, appear uninteresting and insipid.

He entered the room, as all gentlemen of his profession do, with a grave solemnity of visage, their hat in one hand, and the

other of course disengaged, ready to receive in it the reward of their trouble, whether that consists in a hasty summons from a good dinner, and from which there is no occasion often to hurry themselves; for, if the patient be in a dangerous state, they cannot prolong life beyond its fixed time, and the *main* point is certain to them —if a lingering one, there is no necessity for immediate attendance—an hour hence will answer as well as the present moment; then, in either case, they may view the person or the pictures, should there happen to be any round the room, or the prospect perhaps from the windows—examine into the nature of the complaint—and look over the day's paper, does it come in their way —prefix the letter R to a short Latin essay of abbreviated words—and the business is done.

Doctor Hastings drew near the couch where lay the inanimate figure of Lady Fitzwalter; he felt the place where the pulse

pulse should be, for it was silent to the stop-watch.

"Bless me! bless me!—eh—eh—eh! what—what's all this—eh?" said the old gentleman—"what—what—eh—what was the cause of all this—eh?"

No person could tell him. The servants said, their Lady had withdrawn to her chamber, as well, to appearance, as they had ever seen her, and they could inform him nothing further as to what produced her present state. Had there been any vestiges, about the apartment, of the business which had brought her Ladyship there, Anna could have surmised something of it, but not a paper of any kind was visible, neither had she known the intention of Lady Fitzwalter, therefore could form none of its arising from that particular quarter.

"Can't tell—can't tell," went on the sage

sage disciple of Æsculapius; "very odd—very odd—very odd, indeed. Something very terrible has happened to her—something dreadful—dreadful—dreadful, indeed—dreadful!"

"Is her Ladyship in danger, think you, Doctor?" asked Emily.

"Danger—danger—danger, Madam!" cried he, looking surprised at her question, "to be sure she is; would not answer for her life four-and-twenty hours—not four-and-twenty hours; can't do any thing for her, till Doctor Wakefield's called in—can't, nor won't—won't; no, cannot, nor will not."

"Will not, Sir!" said Mrs. Grenville: "And would you leave her in that state, without any attempt to recover her from it, till he could be sent for and arrive?"

"No—no—no!—administer little trifling restoratives, which can't do any harm," replied he, "but shall not try experiments; she may die. Must have a consultation; send—send—send immediately; not half

an

an hour's distance—take my carriage. My honour—my honour—my honour obliges me to have him called in. Desperate case—desperate; never met but one like it—a young woman terrified by a mad bull. This case is through a fright also—a shock—a shock; need not explain to you, ladies,—would not understand. Chafe her—chafe her with strong volatiles."

This was done—the Doctor directing, and sometimes assisting, but as he said, so their endeavours were found—wholly unavailing; not the smallest reanimation appeared; and had he not assured them of life being still remaining, though he could not answer for its duration, they would have believed that all that was left of the beloved Lady Fitzwalter was a breathless corse.

Doctor Wakefield, or, as he frequently was called, Doctor Pomposo, did not delay any great length of time, considering him to

to be a man of such vast self-importance: he moved by rule, and spoke by method, and every syllable was separately pronounced, with a gravity becoming his large wig; he was likewise a Johnsonian stickler, and studied Lexiphanes with as much attention as he observed the *materia medica*.

"Hem," clearing his throat as he entered, and bowing to the ladies, "hem, hem, your servant, Doctor Hastings. Hem, I have got an un-plea-sant ra-ci-di-ty, hem. This is the pa-ti-ent, I pre-sume, humph," feeling her hand; "has she been long in this state?"

Doctor Hastings replied to the length of time *he* had been told.

"Humph," repeated the consequential enquirer, "is she of an a-tra-bi-la-ri-ous ha-bit, or dis-po-si-ti-on?"

No

No one answered, for Doctor Hastings did not know—the rest did not rightly understand.

"Me-lan-cho-lic," said the grave physician, looking more important.

"For some years back," Mrs. Grenville replied, "Lady Fitzwalter has been more so than otherwise; some heavy family events have dwelt impressively on her Ladyship's mind."

"Humph, humph."

"This—this—this is a—a—a recent business—a recent business, my friend," said Doctor Hastings to his brother chip, "occasioned by some sudden—sudden or hasty matter."

"Humph," cried the other, "a complete ca-ta-lep-sis, humph; the pe-ri-car-di-um of the prin-ci-pal seat of a-ni-ma-ti-on of the a-ni-mal sys-tem is con-co-a-gu-la-ted, by which the re-gu-lar di-li-ta-ti-on of re-spi-ra-ti-on is im-pe-ded, and the e-bu-li-ti-on of the flu-ids ob-struct-ed. We

We must con-trive to re-lease them from their pre-sent a-re-ta-ti-on, as the only means of pre-vent-ing to-tal an-ni-hi-la-ti-on."

"What think you of bleeding her?" said Doctor Hastings.

"Humph, phle-bo-to-my," returned the other, "good, ap-pris-i-mate the cur-rent to its ap-pro-pri-ate chan-nels."

"And souse l e —souse her," cried Doctor Hastings, "souse her into a hot bath—eh—eh—a hot bath."

"Im-merge her in-to a te-pid va-pour," he replied, with an assenting nod, "and take par-ti-cu-lar care to a-void re-fri-ge-ra-ti-on, as she is with-drawn, which would ef-fec-tu-al-ly ex-a-ni-mate all pros-pect of re-a-dep-ti-on."

"Aye—aye—aye," cried Doctor Hastings, with a degree of impatience, and as if willing to let the *great* gentleman understand that he had anticipated him in all his directions, "aye—aye—aye, I know—know—just what I intended, only thought it

it necessary to have an assistant, for fear of accidents; shall bleed her myself, though not my business—no, not an M. D.'s business to bleed his patients any way but one —eh—eh—eh, Wakefield! you understand —eh, you understand?"

"Hem!" was the immediate reply.

The consequential man thought it unbecoming the respectability of the profession to jest on any of its terms, and derogatory to his own station to relax the seriousness of his impending brow.

"The effect will be found ad-van-ta-geous," continued he, not noticing the words of the other, beyond their applicable tendency to the patient; "the im-ma-bi-li-ty of the na-tu-ral cir-cu-la-tion be-ing once sur-mount-ed, all dan-ger is over. The heart will re-co-ver its func-ti-on, and the at-mos-phe-ri-cal mat-ter pass-ing through the pul-mo-na-ry ves-sels, will, by de-grees, re-move this co-

ma-to-sa,

ma-to-sa, and re-store the or-gans to their pro-per e-las-ti-ci-ty."

Doctor Hastings began to feel his chair uneasy, and even the ladies got restless at this tedious delivery of his words, which delayed the application of those remedies; but they were, however, soon relieved, when, after two or three humphs, and as many haws, as the great wigged man of science scrawled over a short-hand Latin enigma, for the Calen observer to expound and compound, he rose to depart, with the same settled countenance of philosophic gravity that he had entered; never unbending the rigidity of his brow, until Mrs. Grenville *shaking hands* with him, called forth a momentary relaxation of the playful muscles of his face, as he half bowed, and resuming his important look, withdrew, to the great satisfaction of those he left behind him.

"That's a cursed, cursed foolish fellow," cried

cried Doctor Hastings, as the other disappeared; "talks more nonsense in an hour than the rest of the fraternity does in a year. But could not do without him; dangerous case—dangerous case. Say I killed the patient, did she die—say I killed her for spite All very well now; I'll stop here—yes, I'll stop here till I see a change for better or worse. Come, come, get me some bandages and a couple of tea-cups, and order the hot bath, and the bed warmed, and have flannels to wrap her in. That's all right—right, young ladies, right. Good woman, Lady Fitzwalter—very good woman. Meet her often about here, when I'm visiting my patients, looking after the poor and sick. Pity she'd die—pity, pity she'd die—hope she won't this time. Shall give the slip to Death and the Doctor, or it will go hard with me. Eh! eh, Death and the Doctor—confounded hard to 'scape both at once, they say. Eh, eh!"

Thus ran on the good Doctor, while he, unremittingly,

once more breathes—dear beloved Lady Fitzwalter!"

Lady Fitzwalter drew her hand from the hold of Anna, the expression of her eye became wild, she struggled with a convulsive spasm, and, as well as her feeble voice admitted, shrieked out—"O never—never will I answer to it? Who calls me by that name?—Oh God! Oh God!"—and again she relapsed into insensibility.

It was not of long continuance—and the Doctor desired, that at her recovery again, a profound silence should be observed, unless she spoke to any person herself; for it was now evident that some very heavy circumstance had produced this calamity, in which, it was generally conjectured, Lord Fitzwalter bore the most blameable part. His Lordship's hasty appearance, and sudden flight, gave but too much cause for this opinion being justly founded;

founded; and Emily advanced in support of it, the demoniac expression of his countenance when she first entered, which had been the occasion of her so vehemently addressing him; but as to what it related to, being wholly beyond their comprehension, all supposition of the subject was as useless as distant. The only thing now to be attended to was her Ladyship's restoration, and the two young ladies undertook, alternately, the office of nurse-tenders, to whom the worthy Doctor gave a second particular charge against their ever making any enquiries of her, or asking any questions which might renew a recollection of the affair, let it originate in whatever cause it might; as he was convinced it would be a considerable lapse of time ere she recovered, (if ever she did so fully) from the effects of this attack; and a relapse, in this convalescent state, would, beyond a doubt, prove fatal.

The opinion of Doctor Hastings was

unerring, with respect to Lady Fitzwalter; for five weeks she lay nearly in a state of infantine debility, scarcely ever addressing her two faithful attendants, though seemingly sensible of their generous exertions, by sometimes pressing their hand as they presented some trifling nutriment or cordial, and with a melancholy movement of her head, weakly pronounce — "Dear Emily," or "Beloved Anna."

They adhered strictly to their commands in never addressing her by the name of Fitzwalter, or dropping a single word in her presence, that could recal any unhappy retrospect; and when Mrs. Grenville visited her, she never used any appellation but "Caroline:"—and this strict observance, together with the tender assiduities of her friends, was, at length, productive of a favourable appearance. Her Ladyship once more raised her languid head from the pillow of affliction, rather than indisposition; and when weariness dropped it,

instead

instead of returning to rest it there, she reposed its weak throbbings on the soothing bosom of friendship.

As she rested her emaciated form one day, leaning on the shoulder of Anna, a deep, a long drawn sigh, issued from Lady Fitzwalter's poor afflicted heart, and she laid her hand on it, as with upraised eyes, she seemed a few minutes in profound meditation.

"My dear girls," said she, addressing both Anna and Emily, when, after a short period of thought, she opened her lips, with a woe-fraught expression on her pale face, of its internal correspondence, "my dear girls, I am gratefully sensible of your kind attentions to my poor harrassed mind and body. Oh! what have been the sufferings of the latter to the agonizing feelings of the former!—Nothing. Oh! just Heaven, thou knowest they have been as a bubble on the ocean. The bubble passeth

away, but a sea of sorrow must engulph me. Oh, great God of justice, a day of retribution will come."

She flung herself on the bosom of Anna, who felt the rapid boundings of her Ladyship's heart, as she folded her arms round her. Neither of the young ladies ventured to reply; they knew not what to say, and were afraid of saying too little, or too much; but her words and her manner affected them to tears.

"You weep, my young friends," continued she, again raising her head; "you weep for my sorrows, but they are unknown to you; they are unfathomable to every human being but him who planted them. God alone can penetrate their source; and this heart, this wretched breaking heart, is doomed to feel it for ever."

"Oh, my friend, my beloved friend," cried Anna, who avoided addressing her by name, "Oh, why resign yourself to endless sorrow?

sorrow?—Alas! you have already experienced its deepest pangs, and in this trial, be it what it may, as in the past, Heaven is merciful, to hope through it a mitigation."

"Hope!" she repeated, "yes, I hope in Heaven, through death; for death alone can obliterate memory. Will that even obliterate the remembrance of what's here?" pressing her hand to her bosom: "Can death shut out the recollection of my agonizing sufferings?—No. Before the judgment-seat of the Almighty, they will be found engraven on my heart, and cry for justice on their base author. Oh, Father of Mercies," cried she, clasping her hands, "forgive me—forgive him. I do not curse him; oh no—oh no! Though his crimes be as black as the fell fiend who directed them, spare me, O God, the guilt of reprobating him; thou, O God, art his only judge: be merciful in thy judgments, I beseech thee, to the errors of thy sinful creatures."

Her Ladyship raised her eyes with meekness and devotion, as, for the space of a few minutes, she seemed to address with fervour the gracious Being she called upon, while Emily and Anna beheld her strong emotions with more concern than wonder, since they but too well guessed who the person was she so severely accused, and so charitably prayed for; yet the extent of that accusation was a secret, which was not for them to enquire into, however they might have wished to be informed of it; yet not solely from motives of curiosity, but from the hope of being allowed to share in the deep affliction which had taken possession of Lady Fitzwalter's mind, and which was but too evidently fixed there, never to be erased.

"I see you are astonished and grieved, my beloved young friends," resumed her Ladyship, "at this new addition to my misery. Did you but know from whence it proceeds, every feeling of your soul would

would be harrowed up in the vortex of its magnitude. I raise your curiosity, I excite your compassion, but I cannot satisfy the one, or tell how greatly I merit the other. Alas! I am solemnly bound. I have an oath, registered in Heaven, though made to a ——" Again she sighed, as if her heart would rend by its oppressive weight. "It was made to Fitzwalter—to my husband. Husband!" she repeated, "I abjure, abhor, renounce the tie eternally.—The name of Fitzwalter, be it blotted from the creation, be it forgotten by the world; and never may the detested appellation be given to me, to wound my ears, as it has already wrung my heart with woes incurable. While the first fatal stab to my peace, in the death of Villeroy, agonized every feeling of this sad bosom, and drew the tear of pity from the compassionate beholder, his soul was dead to every emotion of tenderness, virtue, or honour. Oh, let me not dwell on it, or my fevered brain

brain will rouse to madness, and proclaim to the world that I am a wretch, and Fitzwalter the basest of men."

The tears rolled down her pale cheeks in torrents; her bosom throbbed with heart-rending sighs; its convulsive agonies shook her entire frame; the lovely young friends leaned over her, in silent anguish. They could not address the unhappy Lady Fitzwalter in accents of consolation; her sorrows were beyond their reach, and they could only partake of the deep grief which appeared indelibly fixed in her soul. Yet the fervid devotion of the sufferer's heart was unshaken; when the effervescence of her despair had subsided, in the trickling drops of bitter affliction, religion appeared to diffuse her tranquil blessings on the mind of this humble daughter of unexampled woe.

She addressed her prayers for patience

on herself, and fortitude to submit to the dispensations of her Divine Master; she implored his mercy in favour of the wretched author of her miseries. "Eternal Dispenser of Justice," would she cry, "hear the supplications of the lowliest of thy creatures, who solicits of thy mercy, pardon for the most offending. Extend thy gracious attributes to rescue the guilty Fitzwalter; give him to understand the enormity of his offences; strike conviction to his soul, ere it be too late, and enable him, O God of truth, by the only reparation he can make on earth, to establish his peace with Thee, before Thou summonest him to his grand account!"

But where was the wretched being she so fervently prayed for?—No person could tell; he was as hidden as his transactions; and the unhappy Lady Fitzwalter, brooding over her silent sorrows, beheld months pass over, whilst only her own sad heart

heart could explain why each returning hour and day was anticipated, as if the event of her future life depended on the approach of some moment which was to decide every important and every impending destiny of it.

END OF VOL. II.

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THE

HEIRS OF VILLEROY.

A Romance.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY

HENRIETTA ROUVIERE,

AUTHOR OF

LUSSINGTON ABBEY, &c.

As by degrees, from long, though gentle raine,
Great floods arise, and overflow the plaine;
So men from little faults to great proceed,
Guilt growes on guilt, and crimes do crimes succeed.
WAINDESFORD.

VOL. III.

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1806.

THE

HEIRS OF VILLEROY.

CHAP. I.

The parents' partial fondness for a child,
An only child, can surely be no crime!
'Twere breaking all the tender strings of Nature,
Which tunes our souls to harmony and love.

SHIRLEY.

DURING the period of these transactions at Deventon, the young companions, De Courcy and Arthur, were proceeding in their travels through different countries and places. It was not merely to take a

casual view of what came in their way, but to observe with attention, and apply with diligence, for such information as tended to improve their understanding. De Courcy was of too serious a cast to find amusement in a promiscuous round of company or entertainments, and too settled in his principles to be led into either, contrary to his better judgment, from any absurd idea of being ridiculed by his more dashing acquaintances, for the gravity of his temper, or the nicety of his morals. He did not censure them for entering into whatever pleasures they were disposed to pursue, or spending their time and money in frivolity and dissipation, without deriving any advantages from their travels, but their being known to have made the tour, and were of course considered at their return as connoisseurs and fine gentlemen, if not scholars and enlightened men. He followed his own maxims, and partook of the different countries amusements but as a relaxation from more serious matters, or to assimilate

assimilate their proportionable qualities to each other.

Arthur pursued the line of his friend, in improving his mind, and expanding his abilities. He studied men and manners, and was unremitting in his pursuits to acquire a fixed knowledge of the most accomplished branches of learning. He was aware of those precious moments bringing the most essential concerns of his life, and he did not lightly lavish them, or the opportunities they afforded, which, if slighted now, could never afterwards be recalled. He seized them with avidity, and applied with energy to extend the natural shining qualities of his understanding. Dr. Barclay discovered in him a genius deserving of cultivation, and gave, unasked, his assistance in enlightening those bright talents, which promised, at a future period, to reflect lustre on the head and heart of their possessor. He found not only a willing and quick, but also a grateful pupil, who

often told the worthy man, jestingly, "that if ever he arrived to any eminent station, he would exert his best interest to procure for him a Dignitary, as a return for his important services, and generous instructions."

De Courcy's deportment to Arthur had been, from the first, kind and attentive; but the affecting interest his beloved Anna had manifested for him, together with his own engaging manners, at once manly, ardent, and unassuming, rivetted the esteem of De Courcy; and the friendship of these two amiable young men became mutual and immutable. The rank and recommendatory letters of De Courcy introduced him into the first circles as he proceeded; but he seldom devoted a larger share of his time to them than what respect made unavoidable, preferring the society of his tutor and his friend to every other those places afforded. He sometimes prevailed on Arthur to accompany him in those visits, conceiving it would

would be a deliberate insult to his feelings, did he exclude him from the intercourse of his own acquaintances; and though De Courcy's actions and appearance were suitable to his station, he could not but acknowledge that Arthur, with his humble one, was the most finished gentleman. He had a peculiar dignity in his look and manners, which, with the elegance of his figure, and beauty of his countenance, gave to him the easy air of the first rank: yet Arthur was conscious to himself of his mean birth unsuiting him from mixing in those societies, which obliged him frequently to decline the generous invitation of his friend. His good sense pointed out to him the necessity of guarding against a too-forward presumption, by which he might become liable to insult; but his innate feelings spoke him on an equality with every gentleman, and in company with the highest, he was free of constraint or embarrassment.

On their quitting England they had entered France by Calais, crossing the Spanish provinces to Germany and Switzerland, at which places they stopped, stated periods, to view and make researches, continuing their journey to Italy by Venice, and through Mantua, taking the direct route to Naples, from whence they intended returning by Rome, Florence, Geneva, and Piedmont, entering France again by Bourgone and Orleans, proceeding to Paris, and from thence home.

The gay appearance of Naples could not fail of attracting the travellers' attention; it diffused over them an exhiliration of spirits to participate in the happiness which seemed to pervade every bosom. The women were seen dressed in light silks, embroidered according to the wearers' abilities, rather than their station; some displaying flowers worked in tasteful shades, others embossed with gold and silver, as they tript along the streets in all the fascinating

fascinating charms of beauty and loveliness. It is said of the Italian ladies, that they are in the street, angels; at the window, syrens; at the door, magpies; saints in the church, and devils in the house; and our travellers allowed one part of the proverb to be true—for their appearance, as they passed, was truly captivating; but for the remainder, they had yet to learn how far it was to be credited. Ribbands, plumes, and flying ornaments, decorated the horses' heads, no less than the women; and the carriages exhibited equal taste in their embellishments. The shops presented an inexhaustible variety of riches and magnificence, set out to advantage, and adorned in the most fanciful style. The pastry-cook and fruiterer created an appetite at every turn, the latter shewing the oranges and lemons, drooping from artificial green boughs, scenting the air with their fragrance, and alluring the passenger by their mellow freshness. Grapes, melons, and figs, were alike invitingly disposed, suspended from

festoons or garlands in an intermixture of pleasing forms. The houses of the nobles presented the most splendid decorations both within and without. Groves of luxuriant flowers rested in sumptuous vases on the gilded balconies, overspreading the windows with their variegated profusion, and dispersing their balmy perfume along the streets, and throughout the chambers. Above, a brilliant azure sky preferred its glowing tints to rival the lively dye below, and the dazzling sun emitted its fervid rays to eclipse the sparkling lustre; its brilliant reflection threw new splendour on, or, playing on the transparent bosom of the Bay, gave to the admiring eye a second Heaven, in all the glorious effulgence of the first.

De Courcy had brought with him particular letters from his father to a nobleman of high distinction, resident here, with whom his Lordship had been in habits of intimacy some years before; and it was a particular

particular point, that his son would cultivate an intimacy with the Marchese di Ludovisa's family—he was a relation of the Prince of that name, and an acquaintance in it could not fail of introducing the person to the notice of the first ranks in Naples. But ere De Courcy presented these letters, or made known his arrival, he visited every place of curiosity immediately about the place, least his time should be so much engrossed by this family, as not to allow him sufficient leisure to make any accurate observations. Our young gentlemen visited the famed Elysian fields, of poetical celebrity, near the place where formerly stood the city of Baiâ, whose walls and arches were to be seen under water, when, on a bright day, it was clear and undisturbed. But all that remained of these renowned groves, was a piece of common ground, which would require the wisdom of Socrates to tell what it had been, if the tradition of its fame had not been handed down by posterity. The subterra-

nean building, near to the above, was likewise investigated, which had been erected as a receptacle for fresh water, when the Roman vessels harboured near it; and not far distant stood the ruins of Nero's palace, with the remains of a superb mausoleum or tomb, that enclosed the ashes of his mother Agrippina. The magnificent baths of Cicero and Tritola no longer afforded a pleasing refreshment; they exhibited a lesson of the frailty of man, and man's most admirable works, which shall decay—

> "And like the baseless fabrick of a vision,
> Leave not a wreck behind."

The grotto of Pausilipus, which had been a work of labour, was an object of curiosity to the enquiring travellers, it being cut through the heart of a mountain, more than a mile in length, and of a width proportionable. Two or three others were also near—one in particular, called the Grotto Del Cane, which emitted a sulphureous

reous stench, both disagreeable and unwholesome. Near it were the ruinous gardens of Severino, where, in an obscure tomb, were mingled with their parent earth, the ashes of the poet Virgilius Maro, and over which De Courcy gave the tribute of a sigh to the memory of departed merit.

Their next visit was to that prodigy of nature, Mount Vesuvius, whose terrible eruptions, whenever they occur, bring destruction and desolation to whatever opposes them; they ventured as near the mouth of this terrible volcano as any of their predecessors had done, in their examination, to behold, with astonishment, the fiery exhalations produced from a cause no less wonderful than unsearchable.

Having scrutinized into every curiosity of nature and art appertaining to or near the city, De Courcy gave a few days longer to repose, when he then presented his

packets to the Marechese di Ludovisa. This nobleman no sooner knew him to be a son of Lord de Courcy's, than he welcomed him with the most cordial friendship, invited him, on a familiar footing, to his house, and introduced him to the Marachese, as the son of a gentleman he very highly esteemed. This reception was flattering to De Courcy, who had learned, since his arrival in Naples, that this family was particularly noted for their haughtiness; but he discovered none in the Marechese or the Marechesa's conduct to him; and, on a nearer acquaintance, he found this character not justly founded; for though this nobleman's manners were distant to strangers, he had a warm heart, and a generous way of thinking. His lady was a most amiable woman, past the prime of life, but still in possession of many personal charms, which, in the bloom of life, must have been exquisitely lovely. She appeared to have an uncommon share of sensibility in her character, and it threw a

softness

softness over her features that rendered her truly interesting. The Marechese was a fine handsome man; and the air of grandeur throughout his person might give to a common observer an idea of its originating in pride, which was not the case. His Lordship was descended from an antient family, and united to a lady of equally superior birth; and this being well known, he was supposed to derive a large portion of self-consequence from the exalted dignity of both houses; and being considered as one of the first rank in Naples, his character was judged by those whose inferior station kept them at a respectful distance. It was also guessed at, through the medium of his daughter, who, in her visits abroad, or stopping her carriage at the shopkeepers' doors, was more generally and more justly known, and which was marked with haughtiness, almost bordering on contempt, to those beneath her. Lady Agnes di Ludovisa was in her person what Lady Mary Montague said of Fatima, as far as

as woman could be, gloriously beautiful; and nothing could surpass it but her inordinate loftiness. She was majestically tall, resembling, in that respect, her father; her face was beyond description fine, and her black eyes sparkled brilliants; her hair was of the same colour, and shone like the raven's back, and in such profusion, that it was as much admired as her face. She never wore rouge, for the carnation of her dimpled cheek did not require it; and her coral lips, when opened, shewed a set of pearly teeth. She was not dazzlingly fair, but more so than the generality of Italians; and possessed their vindictive spirit, without many of their virtues to counteract it. Vanity was her ruling passion, and to that she sacrificed every nobler principle. She looked with disdain on every beautiful woman but herself; and even with the representative of it, Lady Agnes would have contended for competition. Wherever she went, she was followed to be gazed at; but with all her charms she

was

was more admired than courted, and more flattered than respected. Friends she had none, and her lovers dreaded to urge a suit which might decree the future unhappiness of their lives; and, surrounded by them, she found her less lovely acquaintances get husbands, while she remained single, and unsolicited.

When De Courcy was introduced to Lady Agnes, he was rivetted for a few moments with astonishment at her surprising beauty, surpassing every thing he had ever beheld; but he soon discovered it to be her only perfection, and he lamented, for her own sake, that it was so. It brought a comparison in his mind between her and his gentle Anna, and the lively amiable Emily, which ended in giving to them, through the virtuous qualifications of their hearts, the more sincere admiration of their less striking personal charms.

De Courcy became on an intimate footing

with the Marechese and his Lady, who both liked him very much; but he was not of a disposition to flatter the ears of a vain woman, and was not much in the good graces of the daughter. He, however, spoke in such high terms of her beauty to his friends, Dr. Barclay and Arthur, that it raised their curiosity to behold this earth-treading Venus; and De Courcy mentioning his tutor and young friend to the Marechese and his Lady, received of them a pressing invitation to introduce them, which now, with their permission, he did not delay in doing. The sentiments of Arthur were not unlike those of De Courcy when presented first to Lady Agnes; but the effect of her beauty passing over, he disliked her infinitely more than did his friend. Lady Agnes, on the contrary, gave him her superior approbation, and took every opportunity of shewing the distinction she made; yet he was insensible to it, and shunned her society with more caution than any other person's. She observed his indifference,

indifference, and her haughty soul, firing with indignation at this cold neglect of her charms, she at length treated him with a much contempt as his marked negligence. He had mortified her vanity not a little, also, in a conversation one day, wherein he expatiated on the beauty and peculiar modesty of his fair countrywomen, whose retiring diffidence, he said, gave irresistible charms to their natural loveliness; that they were not vain, or forward to exhibit them, but allowed others to discover them, while they enhanced their worth, by studying to cultivate the more durable graces of the mind.

This untimely speech, which was certainly directed *at* Lady Agnes, raised her aversion to those he so warmly commended, and gave her a most unaccountable desire of eclipsing their famed beauty, by bursting on their astonished sight, to rival, by her superior charms, the timorous simplicity of their's; and to do so, she was determined,

mined, though how, or by what means, was only known to herself.

It was at a private dinner party, given by the Marechese one day, that De Courcy and Arthur, whom his Lordship particularly requested to come, as he was a favourite of his no less than the Marechesa's, met there an English gentleman, who was introduced to them by the name of Villars. His appearance bespoke him a man of some consequence; his manners were cultivated by education, and a perfect knowledge of the world. He seemed to be turned of thirty, with a handsome face, a fine figure, and an engaging address. That he was a man of fortune was beyond a doubt, for he lived in the style of one, had a superb equipage, a train of domestics, and credit on the bank.

This gentleman had been introduced at the Marechese's since the arrival of De Courcy, by Lady Agnes, who had met him one

one evening at a small party, where she attracted his attention beyond a mere admiration of her; and he ingratiated himself so much into her favour by his rhapsodies of her beauty, that she presented him to her father and mother as an English gentleman of consequence. The Marechese made enquiries about him, and learned that he had not been long in Naples, nor was it exactly known what rank he was of, as he seemed to be a stranger travelling for his amusement; but, as the banking-house received and honoured all his drafts, he was conjectured to be a man of respectability. This information, which he found to be true, satisfied the Marechese, and Mr. Villars became a constant visitor at his house from that period.

As De Courcy gave up so much of his time to study, and went so seldom into company, unless particularly requested by the family of Ludovisa, and Arthur never went there without him, and at present less

less frequent than before, they had known nothing of Mr. Villars until this period, although his visits to the family were some time established; but this day introduced them to each other as countrymen, and strangers to each other till that moment. Lady Agnes was more attentive to the new guest than any other person at table; she shewed less airs to him than his two young countrymen; and whatever degree of notice she took of De Courcy, to his friend she was distant and disdainful, almost to rudeness. Arthur felt his situation unusually disagreeable; he was uneasy and restless. It did not solely proceed from the marked contempt of Lady Agnes, for that was atoned for by the polite and kind notice of her father and mother; but an indescribable something hung over him, and gave an air of restraint to all his words and actions, which became visible to his friends, and for which he pleaded a headach as excuse; and, as soon as a moment offered for withdrawing, he left the company,

pany, and returned home before De Courcy. Here he found himself as little at ease; his mind was agitated, his spirits oppressed, and his thoughts unconnected; yet what this uncommon sensation proceeded from, he could not account; he could not throw it off, but he was miserable, apprehensive, and unhappy.

When De Courcy arrived he impatiently enquired after his friend, who very candidly confessed the feelings which had occasioned him to quit the Marechese's on the plea of indisposition, and also that there was a presentiment on his mind of something unpleasant occurring to him before they quitted Naples.

"You know, my friend," continued he, "I am not in general addicted to any foolish weakness; I am not a coward, and I could meet danger without shrinking from its worst appearances. I know not of any that I should apprehend, but if there

is

is such a thing as presentiment in the breast of man, mine points it out most faithfully."

"What danger could meet you?" replied De Courcy. "You have given no offence; you have incurred no resentment, and need not fear the midnight assassin's poignard. Unless indeed," added he, smiling, "your slighting the charms of the beautiful Agnes may have roused her to be revenged of your coldness."

"And even from that quarter," answered Arthur, "it might arrive. An Italian woman, if neglected, is particularly revengeful. Lady Agnes, most assuredly, honoured me with her notice, till, from the haughtiness of her character, I found her scarcely deserving mine, and a distant politeness was observed in my subsequent meetings with her; this I perceive has excited her resentment. Her contempt I despise, but a secret attack on my life I fear."

Dr. Barclay was sitting at a table reading;

ing; he lifted up his head at these concluding words of Arthur, and taking off his glasses, laid them on his book, as with a grave and stern look he said to him—

"And do you think, Sir, that Lady Agnes di Ludovisa would hire bravoes to murder you?"

Arthur was startled at the question, and the manner of its being put to him. He blushed for his own unguarded expressions.

"I did not say she would, Sir," was his immediate reply.

"No, Sir, you did not *say* it," answered the Doctor, who appeared rather displeased; "but your words implied something of having thought to that purpose."

"Then, Sir," said Arthur, "I ask Lady Agnes's pardon for so base an implication; and your's, if I have given you offence. I do not suspect her of being capable of so dishonourable a proceeding, but were I to tell you where my suspicions attached, they

they would be so remote from probability, that I should justly deserve a harsher observation than that you have already made."

"I know not to what cause to attribute your apprehensions, my friend," said De Courcy; "but since they are awakened, you must be on your guard, and never go at night unarmed."

"Perhaps," replied Arthur, "it is only some fancy of my brain, for which I have, at present, no just grounds; I'll endeavour to shake it off, and take my chance for the proof of its truth."

The conversation here ended on the subject; Arthur spoke no more of it, but it was evident his mind was much depressed. De Courcy was very unhappy at this dejection of his friend, and strove to divert it, by entering a little oftener with him into the gay amusements of the place; but they had no effect in dissipating his uneasiness; he still laboured under a depression of spirits, and seemed anxious for

the

the arrival of the time when they were to take their departure from Naples.

In addition to this disagreeable situation of his friend, at the next visit they made to the Marechese di Ludovisa's, De Courcy was received by him with formality, and Arthur with coldness. The Marechesa did not appear, as she always did, when they were announced; and on enquiring after her, his Lordship coolly replied, she was not then visible—of Lady Agnes, she was from home; and this reception, so strange and unaccountable, shortened their visit. De Courcy quitted his Lordship with the same reserve *he* had shewn, determined on never going there again until he went for the purpose of taking his leave of the family.

De Courcy felt himself very much hurt at this capricious behaviour of the Marechese's; nor was Arthur less so; however, he concealed it from the observation of his

friend; and an idea struck him, though as distant from probability as the past one, of his Lordship's having, by some means, learned the truth of who *he* was, and his dignity was offended at being made the companion of a person so much beneath it. Yet how this information could reach him, was out of human conception; for even Dr. Barclay was ignorant of it, and their servants were newly hired by Lord de Courcy to attend the gentlemen when they were leaving England, and knew nothing relating to Arthur but what they saw. Those that had accompanied the party in their excursion to Eure Castle, his Lordship had not brought with him to London again, but sent off to his seat at Oakly Park, to prevent any discovery they might make in town; so that, with these precautions, it was scarcely possible to suppose that he could be known in so distant a place, since De Courcy was the only person acquainted with his real origin, and his care was to make his friend appear in as respectable

respectable a point of view as himself. The Marechese's change of conduct could not then proceed from that cause, and it was as distant to De Courcy as to him; it was therefore adjudged to be the effect of caprice, and Arthur resolved within himself to go there no more. He knew not as yet the determination of his friend, but De Courcy mentioned it, in his presence, to their tutor, with a request that he would leave Naples directly, and proceed on to Rome. Dr. Barclay made no opposition to this proposal, seeing how much it was the wish of both his pupils; and an early day was fixed for their departure, to the particular satisfaction of Arthur.

The English gentleman, Mr. Villars, who they had met at the Marechese's, they once or twice encountered in the street; a polite salutation was all that passed on either side; for, though all of the same country, none of them appeared desirous of forming a more intimate acquaintance; and the

common address of the day was all that took place. But shortly after they had agreed on the day of departure, De Courcy, walking by himself, met Mr. Villars, also on foot, with whom he stopped a few minutes to speak, and, in the course of conversation, casually mentioned his soon going away, and the day appointed. Some more immaterial words passed, when they parted, and De Courcy never saw him after.

The day previous to their intended setting out, he went to the Marechese's, to pay his parting compliments; he saw his Lordship for a few minutes, of whom he learned that Lady Agnes was slightly indisposed, and the Marechesa had gone to her chamber to visit her. He appeared somewhat more friendly to De Courcy to-day, and expressed a regret at his sudden departure, told him he would send him a letter to the hotel that night for his father, and requested him to present his best regards to

Dr.

Dr. Barclay, but never mentioned Arthur's name. De Courcy thought it rather singular that he did not, but he, however, presented to him the respects of his friend for his Lordship and family, at the same time that he left his own on a card for the ladies. The Marechese accepted of the letter, and said he would deliver it himself, but was silent in return to the first; and De Courcy took his leave, not much pleased with himself for having said any thing of Arthur, since he found him so unnoticed, but with the resolution of not mentioning it to him, as it would only hurt his feelings by speaking of it, and not saying any thing on the subject could be of no consequence.

De Courcy and Arthur spent the day at home with Dr. Barclay, preparing for their next morning's journey; and in the evening the former sat down to write to some friends in England, and also his father, informing him of their change of place. He was employed till a very late hour, which

delayed the supper, and they were just sitting down to it, when a servant came in to inform him there was a messenger, from the Marechese di Ludovisa's, wanted to see him immediately. De Courcy supposed it to be the letter his Lordship had said he would send him for his father, and desired him to be sent up to him.

A domestic of the Marechese's entered, on whose countenance was imprinted consternation and affright. De Courcy noticed it instantly, and the first idea that entered his mind was Lady Agnes's indisposition.

"Good God!" he cried, "what's the matter? Has any thing happened? Lady Agnes—How is she?"

"Oh, Signior," replied the man, "she is gone."

"Gone," exclaimed De Courcy, starting from his seat, "you can't say so—it's impossible. Your Lord, whom I saw this morning,

morning, never mentioned her being in danger."

"The Signora went off, it is thought, about six or seven o'clock this evening," said the man, dejectedly shaking his head, "and it was only within this half hour it was known."

"My Lord, the Marechese, is almost mad, and my Lady Marechesa, I left in fits. His Lordship begs, Signior, you will come immediately to him."

"Gracious Heaven!" cried De Courcy, who was dreadfully shocked, "what can I do in this unhappy, melancholy affair? I am unfit to administer any consolation to the poor afflicted parents."

"It is a melancholy affair, indeed, Signior," said the man; "and what makes it worse, is his being a heretic."

De Courcy stared at the fellow, believing him to have lost his senses also.

"A heretic!" repeated he; "what the devil are you saying?"

"It was the devil indeed tempted the Signora," replied the servant, "to sell her precious soul, by telling lies to her Sante Padra, as, to be sure, she did, for she was with him to confession yesterday morning. I attended the Signora and her duenna to the church, and if she had said a word about her intention, he would have told it, most certainly, to my Lord or Lady, and her dear soul had been saved. But now, Oh, Sante Josepha! she's out of the pale of the holy Catholic faith, and is lost for ever."

De Courcy was more amazed than before, and now convinced the man's intellects were deranged; or, (merciful powers, what an idea struck him!) that she had ended her own existence. The thought almost overpowered him—he sunk again into his chair.

"Why should I go?" said he to the servant in a faltering voice; "why should I go, to be a witness of so dreadful a sight—to behold the beautiful Agnes a——."

"Ah,"

"Ah," cried the man, "you'll not see her, Signior; she took care to get cleverly out of all our sights. If she could be found, it would be a happy thing for herself, as well as my Lord and Lady; for if matters were not gone too far, his Holiness might give her absolution for only running off with a heretic, as her uncle, Cardinal Manefrida, has great interest with the Pope."

"With the Pope!" exclaimed De Courcy; "what has the Pope, or all the Cardinals, to say to her soul if she's dead, unless they pray it out of Purgatory?"

"Dead, Signior!" cried the servant. "Oh what a blessing if the Signora was! she would be in Heaven. No, no, she is not dead, but gone—gone off with an English adventurer, my Lord Marechese calls him, and a heretic. Oh, Dio! a heretic!"

Arthur started up—"Villars, I'd stake my life for it," he cried.

"The same, Sir," answered the man; "that no one knows any thing about who

he is, or what he is, only that he is reported to have plenty of money; but that is nothing, Signior—the Devil might assist him with that, you know. Will you come to my Lord, Signior De Courcy?"

"Yes," he replied. "Unhappy Lady Agnes! I am truly concerned for your folly, and most sincerely compassionate your poor distracted parents."

"Unhappy Lady Agnes, you may say," cried Arthur, with energy; "for if there is a villain existing beneath the form of a gentleman, Villars is one. I repeat it—Villars is a villain; the character is marked between his brows, and I would not entrust my life in that fellow's hands, for the chance of being regenerated. Thank Heaven, he is gone; though, with all my soul, I lament the fate of his misguided companion."

"Judge not, Sir," said Doctor Barclay, again assuming a solemnity of countenance, "least you be judged. Never censure without proof, or condemn without cause; and

and even with either, or both, be merciful rather than severe. You have no authority to sanction your harsh sentence, for Villars is a stranger to you. If he is proved a man of honour, what reparation can you make, to atone for your groundless accusation?"

"I will not eat my words, Doctor Barclay," replied Arthur, with some spirit; "I would not retract them, though he stood before me."

"Prove them, Sir," said the Doctor.

"His present proceedings prove them, one way, Sir," he replied; "and *here*," striking his bosom, "here is the monitor that speaks conviction to my mind."

"It may err, Arthur," answered he. "But should it even point truly, let it rest where it is, till a better foundation than prejudice authorizes an open avowal of your sentiments."

Arthur could not but acknowledge that Doctor Barclay, as a divine, was right in

condemning him; but, while he allowed the justice of his correction, he could not argue his mind to adopt a change of belief; and his opinion of Villars remained as fixed and unconquerable as before. The Doctor would have accompanied De Courcy to the Marechese's, had the first idea been the true occasion of his hasty summons there; but, on the present, he conceived it would be an intrusion, as the affair was of peculiar delicacy, and his assistance no way requisite. But Arthur insisted on attending him, as the hour was late, and it would not be pleasant for him to return alone; but as he had made a promise within himself, of never going into the house again, since his last cool reception there, he would wait at the gate for his coming, as he presumed he would not be long detained within. The young gentlemen therefore set out, attended by the servant who had come for De Courcy, from whom he parted where he said; and the night being fine and light, Arthur said he would

would walk up and down before the great wall that extended alongside the garden without, till his friend returned. The house stood apart from the general buildings, inside a large court, which was fronted with stately pillars and iron gates, and from these the wall ran a considerable way, till it was stopt by a smaller one, that inclosed the gardens of some private gentlemen. This place was very lonesome at night, it being rather a road; and, at this hour, nothing was heard but the soft breeze waving the tall shrubs, or Arthur's light step, as he slowly paced from one extremity of this wall to the other.

De Courcy was shewn into a chamber, where he beheld the unfortunate Marechese parading up and down it, in a state, as the man had said, little short of distraction; and the poor wretched Marechesa was struggling in violent convulsions on a couch, whilst her women endeavoured to hold, or apply restoratives to her. The

moment he entered, his Lordship caught his hand.

"Oh, De Courcy!" he cried, "Oh, De Courcy! my daughter, Agnes—she is gone! eloped with a base, deceitful villain—has left her too indulgent parents—forsaken them for a wretch she knows nothing of—abjured her faith—abandoned her God and her religion—deceived us. De Courcy, who is that vile creature, Villars? I ask you, for you know him."

"My Lord Marechese!" repeated De Courcy, astonished at this positive charge.

"Yes," continued he, "you know who he is, De Courcy. My deluded daughter has informed me you were no stranger to him—and Villars knew well who you were—and likewise your companion, Sir."

"Well, my Lord," said De Courcy, who felt his integrity attacked, and his spirit roused, "and what did he know of either, that they cared if the world was acquainted with? Your daughter has been imposed on

on in what she informed you—Villars is a stranger to me. If you do not credit my words, my Lord Marechese, you are at liberty to believe as you please."

"And if my daughter was imposed on by an insinuating scoundrel," cried his Lordship, "*I* have been deceived by a gentleman."

This speech was too forcibly uttered, for De Courcy not to perceive that the latter part of it was directed immediately to him; and however remote to him the meaning of it, he felt himself very severely hurt.

"I thought, my Lord Marechese," said he, with as much calmness as he could assume, "you had commands for me very different to what I meet, I am concerned for what has happened; but as I am neither acquainted with, or care for the fellow who has so basely asserted a falsehood, except on Lady Agnes's account, it is impossible I could assist your Lordship's information, and

and shall have the honour of wishing you good night."

"Oh, De Courcy, De Courcy!" shrieked out the Marechesa, "do not, do not leave us."

De Courcy approached the couch where she lay; he took her burning hand in his.

"Dearest Marechesa," he cried, softened by her pitiable situation, "what would you have me to do?"

"Help us to recover our lost undone child," said she, in a beseeching tone: "Oh, do not abandon us in this distress!"

"Has she not yet been sought after?" asked he.

"Yes," cried the father; "and, at this moment, there are a dozen servants on horseback in pursuit of her. England is, I suspect, their place of destination: I'll pursue her thither myself."

"Oh, vain pursuit!" sighed out his lady; "if she is not recovered before then, it will

will be too late to remedy the misfortune. You know the customs of your own country, De Courcy," continued she; "write there, I conjure you. Address all your friends; implore of them to seek out our wretched child. Describe her person—that, *that* cannot escape observation—it has, I fear, been her greatest misfortune. Offer rewards—whatever you do, we will subscribe to, and thank you."

"I will obey you without delay," replied De Courcy, "not only in that respect, Marechesa, but every other you may think adviseable towards tracing Lady Agnes."

"Good, kind De Courcy!" she cried: "Ah, how could a story to your, or your friend's disadvantage, be credited by my Lord Marechese! It is too plain now it was fabricated for the purpose of keeping you both at a distance, lest you should too accurately observe the proceedings of him, who has stolen from us our dearest treasure."

The

The Marechese, all this while, continued pacing the apartment, at times, calling on the name of Agnes, as if tenderly entreating her return; and, again, driving her from him with passion, as he renounced her for his child, and execrated the base Villars.

"Then there *has* been such a story," said De Courcy; "but I ask not to know what it is, at such a moment as this. Be it what it may, it is unfounded. I pledge my honour, that until the moment I met Villars here, I never either saw him, or heard of his name."

The Marechese appeared very much discontented, exclusive of what he felt on his daughter's account: he took two or three turns more about the room, when suddenly stopping, he extended his hand.

"De Courcy," said he, "I am almost ashamed to ask your forgiveness; not from the

the acknowledgement of my error, but for having credited the words of a vile, dishonourable creature. I did listen, and believed the information of Villars, given by my daughter—daughter! she is so no longer—she deceived me—he deceived her. Were I not weakly infatuated by every thing she advanced, I would have despised the report; but I placed implicit confidence in whatever she averred, and never considered the substance when once she decided on the subject. Where is your friend, the Signior Arthur?" continued the Marechese; "to him I owe submission, alike as to you; perhaps more so to him, for he was the object of my particular resentment."

"Then, my Lord," replied De Courcy, who knew that he spoke of another, that other his best friend, who could with more zeal vindicate his cause?—"then, my Lord, be it what it might, I affirm the information false, and the informer a liar—I'll assert it with my life. Arthur is the soul of honour,

honour, and whoever touches his, strikes at mine. He is my friend, and the highest advantage I boast, is the friendship of so noble a fellow."

"Who, and what is he?" asked the Marechese. "I allow to his being deserving the esteem of all who see him; and my question proceeds not from any ill-placed curiosity, but rather a desire to throw a baser accusation on his infamous accuser."

De Courcy was somewhat alarmed by this question, which evinced that something disrespectful had been alledged against Arthur's station in life; and that Villars actually did understand, by some means, what it really was. Yet however humble, there was nothing dishonourable could be attached to it; and if he could not parry the demand of his Lordship by an equivocation, he would no longer hesitate to declare the truth. He, therefore, replied—

"To

"To your question, Marechese, I beg leave to put another:—what does my friend's appearance imply him to be?"

"A gentleman," replied he.

"Then, my Lord, you are answered," said De Courcy.

"I am," added the Marechese, "fully. Oh, what a dupe I have been made to a designing villain, and an artful girl! De Courcy, the honour of my house is stained—my happiness blasted, and my dear Marechesa's peace of mind for ever destroyed. O barbarous, cruel Agnes!" cried he, softening almost to tears, "could you forsake the parents who idolized you, who permitted you, unrestrained, to pursue your own inclinations, who gratified every wish, even before it could be formed, to throw yourself into the arms of a stranger—to become an alien to your friends, your country, your religion—to break our hearts—to shorten our days. But let her go," he added, resuming his passionate manner, "I renounce

"I renounce her. She is no longer a daughter of Di Ludovisa—she has disgraced the name, and I give her up for ever. I would reprobate her, but there is something at my heart which says, that with all her disobedience, should I curse the creature I *was* father too, for I am so no longer."

"Oh, dear Marechese!" cried the weeping mother, "do not renounce my Agnes—it was her destiny. She may return. Villars will be just to her—he will make her happy. She will make submission for her fault—when she is his wife, she will sue for forgiveness. Ah! my beloved friend, Agnes, knew, if our consent had been asked it would not have been obtained; a different faith, and a different country, were obstacles which she was aware could not be surmounted. But I am sure my child will again hasten to our arms; and shall we throw her from them? Oh, no! be her error what it may, she is still

still our daughter. Marechese, do not say you abjure my Agnes, or you give the final blow to my breaking heart."

"My love, my beloved friend," cried he, sitting down beside the Marechesa, and tenderly resting her head on his bosom; "I would not add to its miseries. Were she to return, you could do with me what you pleased. But can we hope for that? Ah, never, never—she is lost to us eternally—Agnes will come no more."

The spirits of De Courcy were so much agitated, he never recollected having left Arthur at the gate, and his mind so distracted, he scarcely knew how to act. This night's transaction, however, set aside all idea of to-morrow's intended journey; and a thought instantly occurred to him, of going in pursuit of the fugitive.

"Order me a horse, and a couple of armed servants," said he, "and, if agreeable to

to you, Marechese, I'll follow the search of Lady Agnes."

"It will be unavailing," he replied, mournfully shaking his head; "she left a note behind to signify as much. We had all the post-houses about Naples searched, if any carriage had been hired for an English gentleman; and so diligent was the scenting, that we traced that engaged for you to-morrow, but no other; and that which belonged to Villars remains behind still."

"They are gone by water, then, instead of land," said De Courcy.

"Enquiry has been also made there," answered the Marechesa, "and equally unsuccessful."

That they must have gone one way or the other, was beyond a doubt, and De Courcy was resolved to make the trial; he would go a few miles on the road to Capua, which was the direct one to face England.

England, and make enquiry thereabouts; it could do no harm, and might be productive of some fortunate discovery. The Marechesa was overjoyed at his generous intention; the vision of hope flitted round her maternal bosom—it floated in airy forms at her heart. She threw her arms on the neck of De Courcy.

"Go, dear, kind De Courcy," she cried, "pursue your noble enterprize. To relieve the agonies of a parent's mind, and rescue a daughter from destruction, is the noblest act man could do. Should you be fortunate enough to obtain any intelligence, Agnes may yet be saved; and if your undertaking proves unsuccessful, still our acknowledgements are the same, and our gratitude eternally yours."

The horses and servants were immediately ordered; De Courcy took his leave, followed by the blessings of the thankful father and mother. He called at the gate

after Arthur; no answer was returned: he walked on a little way, and halloed loudly; he was replied to but by the echo of his own voice. He concluded then, that the patience of his friend had been exhausted, and he had gone home: he, therefore, mounted his horse, and followed by the two servants well armed, galloped up first to the hotel, where, without alighting himself, he had his own man called to him, with whom he left a short message for Doctor Barclay and Arthur, to the purport of his pursuit, lest they should be uneasy at his absence; and, without making any enquiry as to his friend's being returned, spurred his horse, and was out of sight in a moment.

Alas! the proceedings of De Courcy were unavailing; nothing met his ear, or his eye, to bring the most distant prospect of tracing the fugitives. He did not return till late the following day, wearied, exhausted, and disappointed. Hope no longer

filled the mother's bosom; expectation lingered at the father's heart; and despair took place of both: yet their gratitude to him was infinite, and their thanks boundless. All tidings of Lady Agnes were at an end; Villars was too obscure to be traced, and too secret to be discovered. The unhappy parents were more miserable than ever, and their slender support was now on De Courcy's addressing his English correspondents, which he faithfully promised to do, after he had refreshed a little his tired frame. But here too a delay occurred—a delay which excluded the possibility of the attempt being successful, and plunged De Courcy into a deeper sense of misery, more poignant, from its being more interesting, and more acute, from the fatality which threatened to attend it.

CHAP. II.

——Is there a crime
Beneath the roof of heaven, that stains the soul
Of man, with more infernal hue, than damn'd
Assassination? CIBBER.

ON De Courcy's arriving at home, he found only Doctor Barclay, who had not yet sat down to dinner, as he had postponed the time of it in the expectation of his pupil's return; but perceiving him very much fatigued and exhausted, he expressed a desire that he should retire to bed immediately after it, and before he exerted himself any farther in the service of his friends, which De Courcy seemed very much

much inclined to do, by sitting down to write the promised letters, instead of applying for repose; but the Doctor considered his own health the first thing to be attended to, and the letters were deferred to the following day. It was with much concern, that the worthy old gentleman learned the ill success of De Courcy's expedition, and not with less astonishment the particular bad character of Villars, in which there now appeared but too much truth for Arthur's severe decision on it: he sympathized most sincerely in the distress of the disconsolate parents, and agreed in the opinion of the Marechese, that Lady Agnes was irrecoverably gone.

The dinner was still uncalled for, and Doctor Barclay appeared impatient: at length he said—"We will wait no longer for Arthur—I suppose he stops at the Marechese's to dine," and ringing as he spoke, ordered it to be served up.

"At the Marechese's!" repeated De

Courcy; "my dear Sir, what put such a thought into your head? Has he gone there to look for me? I wonder, if so, how I could have missed him—I came directly from thence."

"Why," said the Doctor, looking somewhat surprised, "has not he been with *you* all this time past? Did he not attend you in your fruitless expedition? Or did he remain behind with the poor unhappy father and mother?"

"Gracious Heaven!" cried De Courcy, "has not Arthur returned home since last night, Doctor Barclay, that you ask me those questions?"

"I have not seen him from the time he went out with you then," replied the Doctor; "nor was I anyway uneasy at his absence, believing him to be still with you."

"Oh, good God!" cried De Courcy, very much alarmed at a circumstance so unusual, "what can this mean? out all night, and all this day, without any account from

from him to signify the reason of it! there must be some mistake."

The servant came in with dinner, of whom De Courcy enquired whether his friend had not sent any message or note, that might have been forgot to be delivered?

"None," was the answer; "there had been nothing heard of, or from him, since he went out the night before."

De Courcy informed the Doctor where he had parted with Arthur, and his having called to him at the gate, without receiving any reply, from which he conjectured his having returned home.

"But this is a most alarming circumstance," he added, "and must be searched into instantly. Fly," said he to a servant, "to the Marechese's; make enquiry there: he may, perhaps, have joined some of Lady

Agnes's pursuers. Be quick, my good fellow, and particular in your orders."

"More likely he might be found at the house of some courtezan," said Dr. Barclay, drily.

De Courcy's face flashed with a momentary indignation at such an ungenerous aspersion of his friend's principles, which were very remote from the probability of encouraging that idea with any foundation of its being true.

"He is at no courtezan's house, Sir," cried he, with warmth. "The character of my friend is too well known to you, Doctor Barclay, to credit the possibility of your remark being just; neither do any of his actions merit a sarcasm, which is as illiberal as it is ill-founded."

"You are warm, Sir," said Dr. Barclay: "but you will allow that Arthur is but a man, and therefore not infallible. I should be sorry to injure his reputation, by advancing

advancing any unmerited reflection that could asperse it. I esteem him as much as you do, De Courcy, and have as high an opinion of his worth: yet I make the observation from the possibility only of its being the case, not from the certainty of its being actually so; and where a frail woman throws out all her charms to allure inexperienced youth, it may not always be sufficiently wary to escape her designs. It is no abuse of his principles, therefore, to say, that such a thing might once happen; and in a place like this, where vice assumes the most captivating form, the wonder lies more in a young man's resisting it, than his falling into a snare which may be deliberately set to entrap him."

"Arthur is guarded against the danger," replied De Courcy; "he carries a charm about him, to save him from the wiles of a vicious woman, which, to a man of honour, is a potent spell—the remembrance of a virtuous one."

The Doctor smiled incredulously as to its general effect, and the dinner passed over in silence; on De Courcy's side, sullenness at his tutor's apparent adherence to his own opinion, and an anxiety, amounting to unhappiness, at this unaccountable absence of Arthur.

The servant returned from the Marechese's. His embassy had been as unlucky as De Courcy's; they could give no intelligence there of Arthur: every domestic had been asked, but none of them could satisfy the enquiry. The Signior Arthur, as he was called, had not been seen in the house some days; and the only servant who knew any thing of him during the time, was the man that had attended him and De Courcy the night before, and who could only repeat their having parted from him at the entrance-gate, when he saw him no more.

"I'll search every house in Naples for him," cried De Courcy, starting up from table:

table; "I'll find my friend, living or dead, before I sleep. He had a presentiment of something unpleasant attending him here —and, Oh, good God! Doctor Barclay, should any evil have befallen him!"

"It is a strange and an alarming affair, indeed," said the Doctor; "and must be searched into, without delay. I recollect Arthur having some apprehensions of that nature; but, I trust, they were groundless ones. Don't be impatient, my dear De Courcy," continued he, perceiving him so much agitated, "we shall find all well. Come, come, be a man—your friend is safe, I hope, wherever is. We will go together in search of him; and first proceed in our enquiries at all the houses you have been used to visit in."

"Who can tell," cried De Courcy, with a sudden exclamation, "that on some of their damned infernal Italian practices, he is not in the Inquisition."

"That may be possible," replied the

Doctor; "and, in that case, an application to the Marechese Di Ludovisa will settle every thing at once. We will first proceed as I mentioned; and should we not find him, our resource is the Marechese's interest with the Viceroy, which, in any situation, cannot fail of discovering Arthur, if he's in the country."

The Doctor and De Courcy were just proposing to set out, when a loud knocking was heard below.

"It is Arthur!" cried the latter, and was hastening down, when he heard a strange voice speak to the servant, and he drew back again. The man presently after entered.

"There is a person below, Sir," said he, "who wishes to see the English gentlemen lodging here: he does not appear to be acquainted with your names, but says he has

has momentous business with you; and I think," added the servant, "the gentleman seems to be English himself."

"Shew him up," cried De Courcy; "perhaps he brings some intelligence of my friend."

The servant withdrew for the purpose, and presently returned, conducting a respectable-looking middle-aged man, who bowed politely as he entered, but refused to sit, on a chair being offered him.

"You will excuse the liberty a stranger takes," said he, addressing himself to Dr. Barclay and De Courcy, "in coming self-introduced before you. I have not the honour of knowing you, gentlemen; but your reply to a question I am going to ask, will lead the way to my business here. It is only a chance direction I have, and your being English may, perhaps, prove it a right one. Has any person, belonging

to you, been absent from home since last night?"

"Yes," cried they, both together.

"Yes," repeated De Courcy, "my friend—my companion—my brother in affection. He has been away since then, and our apprehensions for his safety were taking us this moment in search of him."

"Then, Sir," said the stranger, "I have arrived in a fortunate moment, to save you a troublesome, and what it most probably would prove, a fruitless enquiry; for it would not, I presume, have been directed to my retired habitation, and there he has been these some hours."

The man hesitated in his speech.

"He is safe, I hope, Sir!" cried De Courcy.

"I wish I could assure that hope," replied he; "but he has been in danger, and the consequences oblige me to confess, that

that for his safety there are yet the most alarming apprehensions."

"How! In what manner!" exclaimed De Courcy; "your words have a dreadful import."

"His life has been attempted," resumed the stranger, hastily, "and Providence directed me to rescue it from the immediate death-blow aimed at it by the treacherous assassin. But why should I deceive you? —the attack has been violent, and the consequences almost exclude the possibility of hope."

"Oh, Arthur!—my friend!" faintly faltered De Courcy, as he sunk nearly overpowered into a seat near him. "Oh, Arthur! your fears were just, and Naples has proved fatal to you."

Doctor Barclay was equally shocked at this dreadful intelligence, though more master of his reason than De Courcy, who sat the image of horror. He again entreated of the stranger to be seated, who, with seeming

seeming reluctance, complied to his pressing request, as at the Doctor's desire also. He related the circumstances attending his knowledge of the infamous transaction, and the occasion of the unhappy victim to secret malice being under his protection.

He commenced by informing the gentlemen, that he resided in a little retired house, adjoining the Marechese di Ludovisa's garden; that it stood apart from the road, and opened into it by a small folding-door or gate, which enclosed a trifling shrubbery.

"I am not a native of this country," continued he, "gentlemen, as you may perceive from my accent, but of England, though I have lived some years here in Naples. My family consists but of myself and two servants, an elderly female and a lad. I have made it a practice of going out every night, to see that the gate of my little nursery was secured, which, from its being,

being, as I said, a folding one, it sometimes happened that the lock was shot without the bolt being down at the opposite side, by which it could be readily pushed open. It is a trifling thing to mention you'll say, gentlemen, with one of so much more consequence, but it is very materially connected with what I am going to relate. It happened last night, that, engaged over a book, I sat up till a very late hour, and, as I was going to my room, recollected I had omitted my nightly scrutiny; I hesitated whether there was any occasion for my going at that hour, as it was rather approaching morning, and no danger I believed could arise; but, as I stood debating within myself, an unaccountable feeling took possession of me, and seemed to urge me forwards; I obeyed it, rather from impulse than my general motive, when, as I passed down the walk, my steps were suddenly arrested by the noise of a scuffle without, and a voice, saying—

'Cowardly villains! were I not defence-

less,

less, and unarmed, my life should fall at the hazard of some of your's; but, overpowered by numbers, it must be sacrificed to your murdering intentions.'

'Yes,' cried another, 'we work securely, Signior Inglise; we don't take a reward for nothing, and we have been too well paid for dispatching you, not to go safely about it.'

"The person seemed struggling to ward off the attack, and I flew to the gate; the key was in it, but terror shook my hand as I attempted to turn it, yet I had presence of mind, in so doing, to call out, as if to my servants—Help, help—here's murder; run, fly, all of you, to my assistance.

'Dispatch him at once, or we're undone,' cried a fellow; 'damn these Inglise cavaliers, they fight like bull-dogs.'

"At that instant the key turned, when, I presume, a blow had been aimed at the gentleman, with such force, that had it reached him, must have been fatal; for the ruffian came, with all his strength, against the

the half-opening gate, and fell to the ground, stunned by his own weight. Heaven !" continued the speaker, " Heaven surely whispered me what to do; for, stooping over the fellow, I wrenched from him the poniard he held, and passing over, I observed the gentleman leaning his back against the secured side, as he weakly essayed to ward off the attacks of three others. One of them had raised his arm to give a stab at his heart, when I stepped forward, and, as he lifted it, plunged the weapon I grasped into his, and the villain dropped lifeless at my feet. The other two, believing I had finished their companions, retreated a little, when I seized the gentleman's arm, and, dragging him over the wretch who had not yet come to himself from the fall, brought him within side the gate, and again hallooed out as if there was assistance coming. The fellows did not dare advance, neither indeed had they time, for it all occurred with the rapidity of thought. I could have silenced the bravo

bravo at my feet by his own instrument of death; his life was in my hands, but I scorned to take advantage of a fallen enemy; I sent him with my foot into the middle of the road, and instantly made fast the gate, which secured us both from further attempts."

"Oh! noble, generous, brave man!" exclaimed De Courcy; "you have then preserved the life of as noble a fellow as yourself!"

"I cannot say that I have preserved it, Sir," he answered; "I fear I have only prolonged it for a short time. The villains were beforehand with me, or I might have been a happier instrument towards saving it. On returning to the poor young gentleman, after making secure the entrance, I found he had fainted, and I ran to the house to call up my two servants; they came half dressed, and were, at first, alarmed on my account, seeing me covered with blood, but I briefly ran over the affair as we assisted in conveying the senseless sufferer

ater within doors. He had received a wound in his shoulder, one in his side, another in the fleshy part of the arm, and his hands were terribly cut."

De Courcy was near fainting, and the stranger was obliged to pause until a glass of cold water was given, which a little revived him, when, in a languid voice, he requested of him to proceed. He bowed, and resumed his discourse.

"The wounds of the gentleman bled profusely, and my old woman endeavoured to staunch them by applying styptics, and binding them up with napkins, for it was impossible to send them for surgical assistance, as I dreaded opening the gate till an earlier hour, for fear of the villains still lurking about the place; but the moment all danger of that was over, I sent off for the best Naples can afford, which is the Signior del Alcano, to whom I have the honour of being known. He came immediately,

diately, when I related to him the whole affair, while he examined the gentleman's wounds, who still lay insensible. He pronounced them, in themselves, not mortal; but the one in his arm had been given by——."

The stranger stopped awhile.

"I fear to alarm you afresh," said he, "though every precaution has been used to prevent the dangerous tendencies. It was given by a poisoned instrument."

"Oh, damnable monsters!" vociferated De Courcy; "not satisfied with your weapons, but you would secure the blow by instilling the deadly venom!"

"To prevent the fatal consequences," continued he, "it was necessary to perform a painful operation, and make a deeper incision to cut away the infected parts, during which your friend several times came to himself, and as often relapsed into insensibility; but these, the surgeon

surgeon said, were not of any avail, as his weakness was caused through loss of blood; and if, in the space of three days, he found the arm look free of any venemous irritation, he would answer for his life, though his recovery would be long and tedious. In his pockets," proceeded the stranger, "I found some money, a gold watch, a few papers, and a pocket-book, which I opened, for the purpose of seeking in it a direction where I could find his friends, and in it was a card with the address of this hotel, which induced me to make enquiries at this place. Here," continued he, "are all the things I found about him," laying them on the table, "and I should have been here before now, but I waited in the hope of some favourable symptoms of the young gentleman's returning reason, but he still remains in a state next to insensibility; and the Signior del Alcano, who visited him about two hours ago, was of opinion, that I should no longer delay seeking his friends, as the lethargy of his senses,

senses, he said, would not be removed until his body had resumed some degree of strength after the violent effusion of blood."

"Oh, my poor Arthur!" sighed out De Courcy. "Had I been aware of the danger I left you exposed to, instead of running after a seducer, and an artful girl, I would, by your side, have encountered a legion of enemies, and fallen beneath the blood-hounds fury, ere they had perfected their infernal designs. Oh, Doctor Barclay!" he cried, "are we at liberty to ascribe the destruction of our friend to the vengeance of a slighted beauty?"

The Doctor waved his head emphatically.

"Alas, Henry!" said he, "the question wears but too much the form of truth; yet, dreadful as the event has proved, we must not attribute its base purport to any particular individual, on the mere shadow of suspicion. There is nothing, I believe, more to be feared than the fury of an enraged

raged woman; and a neglect of her charms is the weak criterion of her heart: but a female, sprung from the soul of honour, and educated in the principles of virtue, could not surely, at one moment, throw off every noble sentiment, and swell the catalogue of guilt, by adding murder to it. Oh, no! We must not condemn, however strong our suspicions, without possessing unequivocal proofs to substantiate so infamous an accusation."

The Doctor, then addressing himself to the stranger, said—

"You mentioned that one of the villains fell beneath your hand; if the wretch's body is to be had, it may direct us to some insight of the secret designs."

"That," he answered, "has been taken care of by his companions, I should presume; for, on sending my lad for the surgeon this morning, I examined round the place, but could not perceive any trace of the assassins, except what marked the spot

they had commenced their dark intention —the mingled blood of the innocent and the guilty. The body had been removed with caution, so as to prevent a discovery of where conveyed to, as no track was visible from the gate; and I fear the wretches are beyond reach, for such deeds are but too common in those countries, and the perpetrators too often find means of escaping the vigilance of justice. It is necessary, however, gentlemen," continued he, " to notify the affair, without delay, that it may be scrutinized into, ere it be too late to hope for the interference of justice being successful."

" To the Marechese di Ludovisa's!" cried De Courcy. " We will make the affair known, and he can direct us how to proceed in it. Poor man!" added he, sighing as he recollected his Lordship's own heavy affliction, " what a moment to apply to him for succour! Nothing but a case of life and death could warrant such a proceeding in his present distracted state."

" You

"You could not address yourselves to better assistance," said the stranger; "the Marechese is a nobleman of important weight in Naples. Though I live so near his mansion, I know very little of his Lordship, but from the respectability of his rank. If you are acquainted in his family, gentlemen, I think you should call on him as we pass to my house."

"Yes," answered Doctor Barclay, "we are acquainted in the Marechese's family; this young gentleman (to De Courcy) in particular; and it is necessary we should make ourselves known to you. The youth you stepped in to rescue from impending death last night, Sir, a truly amiable, and, I may add, without partiality, a truly noble character, is, with this gentleman, the Honourable Mr. De Courcy, son to an English nobleman of that name, on their travels, making the tour, to whom I have the honour of being tutor and guardian during the time. My name is Barclay."

The stranger started when the name of De Courcy was mentioned, and bowed respectfully to him when the Doctor had concluded.

"I know the name of De Courcy well," said he, "and the nobleman who owns it; I have seen him often in company with a person,"—he sighed profoundly,—"with a person who has been some years dead, but whose memory will ever be dear to mine."

The stranger appeared to wipe his eyes, for, whoever it was he brought to recollection, called forth the humid tribute. It was not the business of our gentlemen to notice, and it subsided without further observation. They prepared to set out for his habitation, as De Courcy declared he would visit Arthur, if but for a moment, before he went to the Marechese's; and the two servants, one of De Courcy, and the other belonging to Dr. Barclay and Arthur, having understood the dreadful account, with horror

horror and lamentation, entreated permission to accompany them, which being granted, they followed the stranger to his dwelling.

On arriving there, he entreated of them to proceed with caution, as a positive injunction had been issued by the surgeon against making the slightest noise, for fear of encreasing the patient's fever. De Courcy and the Doctor therefore followed the worthy host, with the gentleness of a leaf rustled by the breath of evening. They entered a small but neat bed-chamber, the curtains of which were thrown open, as well as the windows; the lights were placed in an obscure part of the room, and the old female attendant sat at the bed head, watching the feeble pulsations of trembling existence, which but gave signs of Arthur's life—of Arthur, who a few days before was in the hey-day of bloom, health, and vigour! But now—Oh! what a change! His dearest friend

would not have traced on his countenance the resemblance of what it had been yesterday—his face ghastly and pale as the cap which shaded it; his eyes closed; his features sunk; and his white lips, half open, to catch, at short intervals, the difficult spasms of respiration, threw over him the appalling representation of death. His dearest, his most affectionate friend leaned across the bed in mute horror; but the soul-subduing sight he could not long bear up against; the feelings of his heart sunk manhood into effeminate weakness, and he rushed from the room into the garden, overwhelmed in the gush of sorrow he had within struggled to suppress. He flung himself on a bench in an agony of tears.

"Oh, Arthur! Oh, my beloved friend!" he shrieked out; "you are lost to me for ever—lost to the world, to which you promised to be its greatest ornament. Death hath imprinted his hand on thy manly face, and silenced the bright emanations of thy noble

noble mind. Oh! cursed be the arm that struck the blow, and trebly accursed the soul that devised it!"

Dr. Barclay would not restrain these violent emotions of De Courcy; he suffered him to indulge his grief unchecked; neither did he advance any arguments to dissuade the severity of his expressions; and in this free liberty of tears the contending passions of his mind found relief, and his oppressed bosom was meliorated to a gentler display of its sorrow.

When De Courcy had recovered a little from the distraction of his first sensations, he went with Dr. Barclay to the house of the Marechese, where they learned his Lady was ill, through the severe cause of her affliction; but his Lordship was in his own room, and, on receiving their names, they were immediately admitted to him. He had assumed a more composed manner since De Courcy parted from him the last

night, and expressed himself happy to find they had not quitted Naples. He began the subject of his daughter, by mentioning the indisposition of the Marechesa, in consequence of her flight, and informed them of his having applied to the Viceroy for his assistance in search of her, who had dispatched official messengers in pursuit of her and Villars; and that he would have gone himself also, but the situation of his dear Marechesa compelled him to remain behind, least, in pursuing a shadow, the substance would escape him.

It was a most distressing aggravation to the Marechese's harrassed feelings, to be obliged to break in on his domestic troubles, by attaching them with those of an unconnected individual. Doctor Barclay, an eloquent and interesting pleader, broke the business they came on to his Lordship, in a pathetic and respectful address, consistent with his and their own emergent situation. The poor Marechese forgot his

own

own troubles in the affecting detail of his friends, and bitterly bewailed the fate of Arthur, which, occurring at the time it did, and by his generous attentions to De Courcy, in his compliance to *his* mandate, heightened the impression of this melancholy event; and, without waiting to hear how far their wishes tended, he gave orders for his carriage to be got ready instantly.

"We will go directly to the Viceroy's," said he. "In a case of this nature, an application to the higher power will be attended to without delay, and he is my particular friend. It is necessary we should have the person who so providentially intervened to prevent the murder being accomplished, which, if it had, you might have sought in vain to discover what had become of your friend; his body had been as hidden as the transaction; and, even as it is, the chance is in favour of the perpetrators escaping detection."

De Courcy withdrew to find the stranger, and returned again in a few minutes, presenting him to the Marechese, who received him with warmth, but before whom this person seemed wishing to prefer an humble distance; but all distinction was waved in his Lordship's manner, who, perceiving his diffidence, stood up as he kindly addressed himself to him.

"I know not, Sir," said the Marechese, "who you are, but your appearance and your retiring modesty bespeaks your respectability, and, if there was no other cause for it, would demand my good opinion; and the order and regularity which I have often remarked appertaining to that house, which joins my garden, now that I learn you have been some years its master, convinces me equally of your deserving it."

The stranger bowed.

His Lordship continued his address.—"You

"You have proved yourself a brave, a merciful, and a compassionate man; you have risked your life, against the fury of armed assassins, to defend that of a stranger; you were merciful to the villain you had at your disposal; and you gave every attention to the unfortunate youth, it was not in your power to preserve entirely from the murderers' attack; and you have fulfilled the duties of a man and a christian, be your station in life what it may. The Marechese di Ludovisa presents you his hand, while he acknowledges that, of the two, you are the noblest character."

The stranger looked covered with confusion at these unlooked-for praises of his Lordship. He was silent to them, but the respectful salute he returned, evinced his humility, and the little merit he arrogated to himself. He would have declined the seat in the Marechese's carriage, but his Lordship insisted, and the stranger submissively obeyed; and, with Dr. Barclay and

De Courcy, they drove to the Viceroy's, where, the Marechese sending up his name, him and his friends had immediate audience. His Lordship stated the business they came on, and the stranger gave in his depositions, which were officially attested. The Viceroy, who was a grandee of Spain, had been accustomed to hear of such transactions in his own country more frequently than in Naples, and was not much surprised at this one; he promised, however, to have a strict investigation of the business, and take cognizance of it without delay, which he most exactly performed. Every exertion was used to scrutinize into it; every suspicious person taken up, and minutely examined; the officers of justice were unremitting in their zeal to make a discovery—but in vain they sought it. The hours which had elapsed in attention to the poor victim of secret conspiracy, afforded an opportunity of its eluding every vigilance; nothing came to light, and the myrmidons of a vile abettor remained for

ever

ever concealed in the impenetrable darkness of their own iniquity.

De Courcy fixed his station by the bedside of his friend, from whence no argument could remove him, except when exhausted nature required some alleviation of her watchfulness; and he threw himself on a couch, in the same apartment, to meet a short interval of restless sleep. The decisive third day, which was to determine the life or death of Arthur, was looked for with ardour, yet dreaded with terror. The Signior del Alcano was unremitting in his attendance; he visited the insensible sufferer night and day, and he awaited the momentous period with as much anxiety as the trembling apprehensive friend. It came at last. De Courcy could not encounter the investigation, and he fled to his accustomed place of refuge—the garden. He paced it up and down with agitated steps; now proceeding with quick and irregular motion, then stopping, as to

listen

listen if any portentous exclamation notified the dreadful bodings of his heart. He threw himself at one moment on a seat, at the next he rose to pursue his shapeless course; he cast his eyes to the windows of the chamber where lay his hopes and fears, and, from the half-closed curtains, perceived a bustling commotion within.

"He is dead!" shrieked out De Courcy, flinging himself on the ground; "Arthur is dead! Oh, my noble Arthur! we are parted eternally. Fatal, fatal friendship!—and, oh, fatal visit to Eure Castle!—but for it you had yet been living, the blessing of your friends—the peaceable, unenvied possessor of your own humble, but happy dwelling. Why did I ever know you? Since knowing, I have loved; and must for ever deplore you. Arthur!—my friend—my companion. Anna!—Emily!—the youth so deservedly cherished in both your gentle bosoms, returns no more to meet you. Anna!—Emily!—Arthur!—all, all who

who are dear to my heart, unite in the sorrow which wounds its peace through life."

De Courcy was absorbed in the intense stupor of his grief, and heard not the footstep that approached, till a hand resting on him, recalled his benumbed senses, and he started up. It was the surgeon. The wretched young man caught hold of his arm.

"Oh, Sir!" was all he could utter, as his voice faltered, his lips trembled, and the agitation of his frame evinced the disorder of his mind.

"My dear Signior," said the surgeon, "why these dreadful emotions? You will injure your health—destroy your life; I must exert my professional authority, and insist on your assuming more tranquillity."

"Oh, Signior del Alcano," weakly replied De Courcy, "you know not the worth of the friend I lament."

"Then," said the surgeon, "if not for

your own sake, for his, exert your fortitude—he is out of danger."

"Out of danger!" exclaimed De Courcy. "Does he live then!"

"I trust he will, many years to come," answered he. "He is *Dio sia sanctifica*, safe from the only danger I apprehended; and unless your violence reaches his ear, to give a sudden revolution to his dormant faculties, no other is now to be dreaded."

"Oh! blessings on the tongue," cried De Courcy, "which pronounces the joyful tidings! My breathings shall not be heard to disturb him. But I observed a rapid movement in his chamber, of those round him; it alarmed me, and was the cause of my ungovernable distraction. What did it proceed from?"

"My examination of the apprehended wound," he replied, "obliged me to search into it, for fear of any lurking mischief; the pain brought him to momentary sense, which was one of the unerring criterions of its being in a desirable state, exclusive

of

of its appearance; and that is far beyond my expectation, and proves the very good state of your friend's bodily habit, which will be the means of forwarding his recovery. He fainted twice during the examination, and it was the occasion of a little bustle among the attendants, who are not so well used to those things as I am. But," continued he, "the strictest silence must be observed throughout the house; for, in the state he is in, the most trifling alarm, that could either operate on the lethargy of his senses, or the debility of his frame, would relapse his fever, and all the art of man would be unavailing towards preserving his life; he, most probably, would die raving mad; but, with care and caution, though slow, his recovery is as certain."

De Courcy's heart was turned, from notes of sorrow, to vibrations of joy. He pressed the hand of Del Alcano between his.

"I will watch by my friend myself," he cried;

cried; "no person shall approach him; I will guard him, as a mother would the offspring of her fondest hopes; and not a sound shall break the solemn monotony of silence, save what himself will make; and you, Del Alcano, shall be the judge of my care—you, who have saved his life—who have attended to him with unceasing assiduity—your abilities and your humanity are proved together; and I speak for him, as well as myself, no reward can compensate for your care, nor no thanks equal his gratitude and mine."

Del Alcano was a man of few words, but much worth. He looked pleased at the warmth exhibited in De Courcy's gestures and expressions, because it convinced him of the friendship that subsisted between these two young men; and he was happy in the thought of having been fortunate enough to restore the life endangered, by which they would be again united in those affectionate bonds, that treachery and death

death were so near dissolving. He persevered in his close attendance, and De Courcy observed, with exactness, his task. No person but the old woman, and his own man, would he permit to stop in the chamber of Arthur, and not even those but when their assistance was requisite; whilst the stranger appeared to devote all his time and thoughts to establish the comfort of his guests: indeed, he was more studious in his attentions than De Courcy wished, who, considering this intrusion on his domestic quiet, could not but feel sensible of its inconveniences to him, which he was by far more distressed at, than the stranger himself appeared disturbed. Yet, as all idea of removing Arthur was out of the question, this house was resorted to by his friends as the principal place of their visitation, and which De Courcy never quitted, or his friend's bed-side, but for a few minutes each day, when, by the surgeon's order, he walked out to inhale a little of the fresh air.

Thus

Thus passed over five weeks. Arthur had not yet regained his proper recollection, though he would, at times, look round the room with a vague enquiring eye, but not appearing sensible of the object he directed it to, or articulating any distinct sentence; yet awakening Reason seemed pointing to her seat, and De Courcy watched its feeble efforts to attain it with redoubled caution: He sat by the side of his friend, counting with impatience the hour, when, once more recognizing him, there would be an assurance of her ascendancy.

A heavy sigh escaped from the bosom of Arthur; he lifted up his trembling lids, and fixed his dull eyes on the watchful guardian near him.

"De Courcy," weakly passed his lips. "My dear De Courcy, is it you?

The person called on started at the joyful prospect of his promised hopes. An exclamation

exclamation of rapture rose to *his*, but he repelled its utterance with quickness, and only replied, with calmness, by repeating the name of—"Arthur! my friend Arthur!"

"Where am I?" he asked in a few minutes after, as he glanced a scrutinizing look around.

"With friends you may judge, by seeing me here," was De Courcy's reply.

"I have been a long while insensible, I think," said Arthur; "have I not, De Courcy? And my head too—it feels strangely affected."

De Courcy feared to speak much himself, as equally dreading the exertion of his friend's dawning reason, which required every precaution, at present, to preserve it from a too sudden revolution; he, therefore, answered to his enquiry, "that he should learn all he wished to know, when, by repose and quiet, he had somewhat recovered his strength and health, and that speaking much would be injurious to both.

Arthur,

Arthur, in the hands of De Courcy, was submissive to his orders; he was now perfectly sensible of what was going forward about him, but particularly so of his friend's attention, which he noticed with strong tokens of gratitude, and obeyed his directions as a child.

From this day his convalescence commenced, but, as the Signior del Alcano had pronounced, it was slow and tedious. Six weeks from that period, he rose, for the first time, from his bed, in which he had languished, in pain and debility, for the space of eleven.

It was now that De Courcy felt his care rewarded; his friend safe, and his own health uninjured; Dr. Barclay happy; the stranger overjoyed, and impatient to pay his congratulations to the young gentleman he had so gallantly rescued from being butchered: nor was Arthur less desirous of giving to his brave deliverer the

the tribute of gratitude so deservedly his due, but which it was not possible mere force of words could do justice to. His heart alone felt it fully, and that was too deeply impressed to admit of language bringing adequate conveyance of its sentiments. Del Alcano was still a constant attendant on his patient, and, with no small degree of satisfaction, did he contemplate the happy effect of his skilful abilities. He now permitted a free admission of light and air into his chamber, allowed him to sit up, and walk about, agreeable to his strength, which, progressively acquiring encrease, his efforts were daily added to.

The stranger came to visit the object of his fortunate interference. Arthur was seated in a great chair, his elbow resting on the arm of it, as he leaned his head on a white handkerchief he held in his hand, and which shaded part of his fine face. The delicate trait of languor was marked on it, as chacing away illness; it cleared the avenue

avenue for returning health; his head was uncovered, and his hair played round his white forehead in careless waves.

"With what pleasure I see your restoration, Sir," said the stranger, addressing himself to Arthur as he entered, "I surely need not dwell on. Had your's been but a natural indisposition, with what joy must your friends behold a promising youth snatched from an early grave; but to defeat the dark designs of hidden malice, must strike every honest heart with thankfulness; and in your escape from it, I feel no less happiness at your recovery, than satisfaction at the triumph it gives you over your enemies."

"Yours is indeed the triumph, my noble deliverer—for you saved my life, at the hazard of your own," cried Arthur, raising his head.

"Merciful Heavens!" exclaimed the stranger, staggering back a few paces—his voice faltered—his eyes rivetted on Arthur's face

face—and *his* flashed, in rapid changes, from red to white—he trembled, gazed, and bursting into a flood of tears—"Who is it I behold?" cried he—"Oh, Sir! who are you?"

Arthur looked as astonished at the stranger, as he did at him; nor was Doctor Barclay or De Courcy less awakened.

"If my name you wish to learn, my kind friend," said the former, "it is Arthur—I claim no other."

"Forgive me, Sir," replied the stranger, still weeping, "forgive my demand—Alas! I know not why I made it—but you have recalled so forcibly to my view, the dearest, best loved friend I ever had, that were I not aware of who it was filled that chair, my mind had probably conjured up his disembodied figure, as having descended from its blest abode. As you are now, Sir, I last beheld him—Oh, Heaven! I have him before me—I see his face in yours—his figure

—his perfect image—and I could kneel at your feet to worship you in his resemblance."

The stranger kissed the hand of Arthur most fervently.

"I will follow you through the world," continued he; "I will be your slave through life, only let me be near you, and at your commands. England is my home —permit me to attend you there—it is yours also, and there I will go. Oh, Sir! you know not what this heart feels at the sight of you—it is unknown to myself, but that it tells me I can never part from *you*. And was it *your* life I was fortunate enough to preserve!" added he, clasping his hands rapturously together; "great God! I thank thee, for granting to me that happiness."

Arthur was very much affected at the stranger's strong sensations; and the resemblance which could so powerfully arrest him,

him, must, he concluded, be wonderfully striking; and he thought it no less astonishing, that he should be indebted for the preservation of his life to the person whose dearest friend he so forcibly brought to recollection.

"It is with the sincerest pleasure, my kind preserver," said he, "that I hear your determination of the same kingdom containing us both. I owe to you my life, and I will hereafter think it safe when you are near me. To England we will go, with my other good friends; for as such, and my deliverer, I am for ever attached to *you*, let yours to me proceed from what cause it may. Yet," continued Arthur, "suffer not my appearance to sway you—it bears no proportion to my station."

De Courcy jogged his chair: the candour of Arthur, he believed, was going to make a discovery of who and what he really

was; and, in the presence of Dr. Barclay, it was not strictly advisable.

"You exert yourself too much to-day in conversation," said he, looking attentively at Arthur; "and I think you had better postpone a longer one, till a future period."

The look and the words of De Courcy conveyed instantly their true import; for Arthur recollected that Dr. Barclay had been led to believe him of more respectable birth than he was; and an avowal of his true one would implicate the integrity of both Lord De Courcy and his son. He remained silent on the subject at present, on the pretence of observing his friend's remark.

Arthur's intention of making his situation known to the stranger, arose from the most generous motives: he was ignorant of his, and

and he would not lead him, by any false appearances, from the place he seemed comfortably settled in, to bring him to another, where possibly he might not have the same resources, and where it would not be in his power to afford him any assistance; and this he took the first opportunity of letting him know, without concealing his dependance on the friendship of the De Courcy's.

"Then," exclaimed the stranger, "beloved, irresistible youth, should not your future prosperity rise beyond my humble means, I'll share with you my fortune. I am not rich, but I have competence—it was given me by my revered, departed friend, who you resemble. I divide it with you during my life, and at my death, all of it that is at my own disposal shall be yours."

Arthur experienced an odd affection rising in his throat, which prevented his

free articulation at this generous and unexpected proof of friendship to him, and gratitude to a deceased patron. It was, however, indelibly engraven on his heart; and his thankfulness for this, and dearer services, was fully proved at a future period.

When Arthur was able to go through the relation, he informed his friends the commencing circumstances of that eventful night, which had so nearly terminated the career of his existence, and brought him to the verge of the grave. On parting from De Courcy, at the Marechese Di Ludovisa's gate, he paced up and down before it for some time; but finding he delayed, he continued his walk to a greater extent, but went no further than the stranger's, which he did several times; and in one of these turns, as he approached the latter, he observed a man on the opposite side of the road, and looking round, perceived another at a short distance from him. He

was

was no way alarmed with any fears for his life or his purse, and still advanced, until one of them suddenly cried out—"Signior Arthur."

"The same," he unguardedly replied. "Who calls me?"

"Right, Bernardine," said the other fellow; "you are an old shot, and never fire without hitting your mark."

There was no room for suspicion now—it was certainty; and Arthur concluded them to be straggling banditti, who knew, and were about to rob him. He was at the stranger's gate, and had but time to place his back to it, when one of the villains wounded him in the shoulder with a short shining blade: he grasped at the weapon, exclaiming—"I am unarmed—if your intent is to rob me, take my money—I give it to you freely."

The wretch dragged the instrument through his hand, as he replied—"We don't want your money, Signior: we have

been well paid for taking your life, and that we'll have, without asking your leave."

At the same instant plunged it a second time into his side, as the other, for he, as yet, saw but the two, gave the envenomed stab to his left arm: desperation nerved his, and he seized the deadly weapon with such force, in his right hand, that he wrenched it from the bravo's, who instantly gave a loud whistle.

"Cowardly villains!" cried Arthur, who warded off the attacks of the other, "were I not defenceless, my life should fall at the hazard of some of yours"—at that moment he perceived two more approach—"but overpowered by numbers, it must be sacrificed to your murdering intentions."

The others were hastening to their companions' assistance, and Arthur was fast drooping with loss of blood, but still used the weapon he held, to keep those near him

him at bay, when he heard the voice of some person coming to his aid; the sweet hope of preserving life renovated his sinking spirits, and he brandished the instrument with all his summoning strength, till one of the succouring desperados coming up, aimed at him with such fury, that he could only hope to repel the blow by a sudden movement of his situation, and he drew a little to the other side of the gate, when, at the instant, he saw the fellow fall: happy for Arthur he did so, or the wretch had secured the poniard in his heart, as they had both fallen together. He observed the gate to open, and, as the first villain aimed at him again, saw the blow given that laid him at his feet: he felt himself violently seized on, and pulled from the spot he stood. His courage and his strength failed together, and he knew no more of what happened, till he found himself, some weeks after, lying in a strange bed, with De Courcy sitting by the side of it. The weakness and pain of his

body recalled the transaction confusedly to his mind; but it was many days after, before he came to a perfect recollection of it.

The Marechese Di Ludovisa came frequently to visit Arthur during his confinement; and if any circumstance could give comfort to his, or the afflicted Marechesa's wounded mind, it was at beholding this amiable young man wear a favourable appearance of returning health; though it was many months ere it was reinstated as perfect as before the melancholy occasion of its decline took place.

Dr. Barclay had written to England concerning it to Lord De Courcy, as had likewise Henry to Emily, and his dearly loved Anna; but not until all danger of Arthur was over, as it would have only raised alarm, and leave them in restless suspence for a long interval of time. The generous stranger was most eloquently

pourtrayed to all, as the indefatigable Del Alcano was spoken of with the praise his care and skill so justly merited; and in Dr. Barclay's letter to his Lordship, he gave a particular statement of the unfortunate affair concerning Lady Agnes Di Lodovisa, which was the first account of it went to England, the business of Arthur having driven every other matter from the mind of De Courcy. In reply to those epistles, came returns from Anna and Emily, both to Arthur and his friend: they were sadly expressive of their concern and deep regret respecting the latter, and most tremblingly apprehensive for his longer stay in Italy, where they feared, not only some future attack on his life, but, likewise, that his friend's might be implicated in the same dreadful conspiracy. To Arthur himself, the letter of Anna spoke the strong feelings of her sisterly affection, lamenting the brother she loved, and conjuring him, when able, to fly the dangerous country: that of Emily breathed the tender effusions

of her heart; she addressed him in the language of love, but it was so delicately distinguished, that, to a common observer, it had exhibited but the effects of ardent friendship. He kissed those beloved papers, which proved to him his station in these lovely girls' bosoms was as firmly maintained as ever, and placed that of Emily's next his heart, as a talisman against every future insidious attack.

Lord De Courcy, in his answer to Dr. Barclay, mentioned Arthur with the affection and anguish of soul that a parent would express for a son in a similar case of danger; yet conceiving him, by the time this letter would reach Naples, in a more perfect state of convalescence, he entreated of the Doctor to quit the country with his pupils, the moment Arthur was in a safe condition to bear the fatigue of gentle travelling; and as their stay in Naples had been so unhappily prolonged, to make as little delay as they could, in the

the

the Italian territories, that they might be home as nearly as possible to the appointed period for their absence. His Lordship enclosed a draft to the value of two hundred pounds English, which he requested might be presented, with his most grateful thanks and congratulatory compliments, to the Signior Del Alcano, for his attention to, and surprising recovery of Arthur, and which he considered as barely the reward of a person who had persevered so unceasingly in his case, and whose skill had removed the mortal effects the murdering blade had expected to make sure.

Four months after the attack made on Arthur's life, he and his friends took leave of all their acquaintances in Naples, but particularly the Marechese Di Ludovisa's family, who yet remained ignorant of the fate of Lady Agnes. The sensibility of the poor mother appeared on her wan countenance, in the deepest traits of affliction, which shewed visible promises of terminating

terminating but too fatally. She wept as she parted from De Courcy and Arthur, conjuring them, by all their future hope of happiness, here or hereafter, to make diligent enquiries after her child; and made them solemnly promise, did any intelligence of her reach them, that, be her situation what it might, no false delicacy would delay an immediate information to the sorrowing parents. The Marechese seemed to support his troubles with much more fortitude than his Lady, to whom he gave all his attentions. He regretted their departure, as depriving him of their society, yet was pleased at it, through the hope of receiving, by their return to England, some account of his daughter.

Our travellers, accompanied by the stranger, who pursued his intention of going with Arthur to his own country, bade adieu to Naples, and, by short and easy stages, journied to Rome. Here they rested some time, as being one of the principal seats of

of the young gentlemens' researches; and from thence pursued their route as first marked down, and crossing the Alps, arrived safe in France, where Arthur, progressively encreasing in health and strength, found the air of it, in many parts they passed through, considerably conducive to its amendment; and where we shall leave them, on their return home, to anticipate a little what their English friends are about, before their arrival.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

"But thou, oh Hope! with eyes so fair,
What was thy delighted measure?
Still it whisper'd promis'd pleasure,
And bade the lovely scenes at distance hail."

TIME, whose lenient hand blunts the keen edge of misery, softened the excruciating agony of Lady Fitzwalter's tortured bosom: whatever the cause of her late afflictions, it was buried in her heart, and there concealed from the scrutinizing search of friendship; only her own could tell it, though every other accorded in sympathy with her's. The yellow hue of sickness

sickness slowly quitted her cheek, to give place to the unsullied lily, but melancholy imprinted on it her indelible mark. She spoke little, and that little was uttered in a voice so plaintive, that it told to the soul of her auditors more than a volume of words. The name of Fitzwalter was never pronounced; and he seemed as if forgotten in the creation, for he was as hidden and concealed himself. From the memorable day he disappeared from the Lodge, nothing had transpired concerning him; and whether his Lordship was living or dead, was as unknown as uncared for. Anna and Emily were Lady Fitzwalter's constant companions; to their wishes she was amenable: the latter preserved her Ladyship's spirits from sinking by her playful vivacity, the former lulled them by her gentle soothings; and these three elegant females, in a group, represented to the imagination, Lady Fitzwalter, under the touching resemblance of Pity, attentively directing her looks to the figure of sweetly-smiling Hope, as

as she rested her languid form for support, on the mirthful representation of Euphrosyne.

Deventon-house was the spot of general resort amongst the happy union of friends. Mrs. Jeffries, the amiable and respected benefactress of Anna, deprived of her beloved husband, and not wishing to restrain the laudable exertions of her youthful friend, became as one of the Grenville family, with whom they all assembled in affectionate intercourse, and found, in each other's society, a little world within themselves.

The absent De Courcy was often the subject of conversation; and as the period of his return drew nearer, the mind of Mr. Grenville rested, with anxiety and hope, on the discovery and termination of an event which was to him the decision of his entire fortune. He heard Emily speak of him with affection, and remember him with kindness;

kindness; but there was no appearance of marked tenderness in her manner, nor no anxiety for his return. Yet Mr. Grenville did not observe beyond the present object of his own thoughts; he dreamt not that the return of a dearer one to her was fondly anticipated, and that, to conceal her real sentiments, she appeared indifferent for the arrival of him, who, though of secondary consideration, would announce the return of his beloved friend.

But when the letters came, that gave to Emily and Anna the dreadful detail of Arthur's situation, not even the assurance of his being out of danger could tranquillize the agonies of Emily's heart. She happened, most fortunately, to be at the Lodge, when the post-boy brought them from Exeter, and they were sent there to the ladies. They wept together, over the melancholy and alarming account; but the trembling, agitated mind of Arthur's best loved, suggested every apprehension, and

was

was not to be pacified by the positive assertions given of his safety. Lady Fitzwalter witnessed the feelings her two lovely young friends tried not to restrain in her presence; and, for the first time, learned it was a travelling companion of De Courcy's whose situation they so affectingly lamented, and whom the tender bewailings of Emily pointed out as an object of particular interest to her. Her Ladyship forgot her own sorrows, to weep over the concerns of the amiable mourners; and, in trying to assuage their grief, she learned the state of both their innocent hearts. Of Arthur, however, they were guarded against making an exact avowal; and her Ladyship was informed of every noble qualification with which his soul was endowed, whilst she remained totally ignorant of who he was, but by his name of Arthur. It was Lady Fitzwalter's turn to pour the balm of consolation into the hearts of her youthful friends; she was given the letters to read, and her unimpassioned mind found in them

every

every thing to hope, and scarcely any thing to fear, for the person so much regretted. The stranger mentioned in them claimed her highest admiration, and the event, all together, appeared as extraordinary as it was unfathomable.

Lady Fitzwalter recollected the contract formed by the parents of Emily and De Courcy for their union. The youthful pair had, without knowing its existence, submitted to the decision their own hearts had made; and in the choice of different objects, their happiness, and their parents' hopes, hung suspended on a doubtful determination. The fortune of Mr. Grenville was at stake, by the resolution of his daughter—her acceptance or refusal of De Courcy; and in the present state of affairs, it was more than probable, her rejection would be the final blow to her father's prosperity: yet if apprised of it in time, and that De Courcy was a man of honour, as there were no doubts to be entertained of

of that, her informing him of it, ere the business was openly made known, would suggest to him the necessity of being the first to object to it; and his affection for Anna would be the most powerful inducement towards his steady resolution against complying with its terms.

Lady Fitzwalter, therefore, after revolving those circumstances in her own mind, and never having received any injunction to silence, which could make its avowal a breach of trust, determined on informing Emily of this contract; which she did, in presence of Anna, pointing out to her her reasons for discovering it, and enjoining her to secresy till its public disclosure, except what she might think necessary to impart to De Courcy. Emily was surprised at the contract, so many years kept concealed, but not at the idea of a union being intended between him and her, for she had suspected its being a desirable wish of her parents and Lord De Courcy, and his

his conversation with her, one day, at Eure Castle, had left it beyond a doubt. Yet had not even past circumstances occurred to render that wish abortive, De Courcy would not have been the object of her affections, in the view she should regard the man she would make her husband; but, in the present situation of affairs, such an event was out of the question. To prevent her father's entanglement, she would do much; but, to save her own life, she would not make miserable the friend of her early and her riper years. She believed there was no danger, however, of her being put to the test, for she was convinced of De Courcy's repugnance to complying with it, equally with her own; but should he even be weak enough to gratify his father's desire, by an appearance of agreeing to it, she would not hesitate in a decided refusal. *Her* father would lose his fortune, and all she could do to make amends, would be to give him the trifling one she should be soon mistress of; she would,

would, with it, give up all thoughts of Arthur, for he was poor, and she would then be poorer than him—she could make no greater sacrifice to him than her happiness, for she never would forfeit that and her feelings of honour together.

Such were the determined sentiments of Emily, and she candidly avowed them, in reply to her informer.

"But De Courcy is too generous," added she, "to hazard either, and too nobly attached to my friend here, to forfeit his own happiness or integrity, for the paltry consideration of a fortune he does not require, and does not look to attain."

"Did I think him deserving of so base a suspicion," said Anna, "I would despise De Courcy—yet not on my own account; for rather than he should hazard his Lordship's displeasure, through his affection to me, I would be the first to wave my right for ever to it. But my Emily shall not be

poor,

poor, whilst I am rich. And am I not rich? Has not my noble, lamented friend made me so. My Emily's parents shall not be poor either. No; I solemnly vow, that if it is decreed the father should suffer through the daughter's refusal, the thousands which will so shortly be at my own disposal shall be theirs, either in part to clear off this incumbrance, or to supply to them the fortune they lose. Nor, except to you both, whom I regard as the sacred deposits of this trust, shall it ever be known to them, or any other person, of whom the gift comes; and my Emily and I will still have sufficient to satisfy our demands."

Lady Fitzwalter pressed the lovely speaker to her heart.

"My Anna—my noble-minded girl!" she exclaimed, "you justly merit our love and our esteem. Oh, may De Courcy be sensible of your worth, and he will prove himself as noble as you are! In the scale

of his happiness, what is the estimate of thousands, when compared with the invaluable treasure of your heart? Nothing. De Courcy will, therefore, be just to himself, and generous to the beloved friend of his Anna."

"Oh, friend most truly!" cried Emily, embracing her; "friend of my heart and my soul! best loved Anna! I will not oppose a single objection to your generous intention. I would not insult the delicacy of your feelings, by any argument to dissuade your noble designs in favour of your Emily, and, dearer to herself than Emily—her parents. I can now courageously face this dreaded contract; and fear no frowns of fortune, whilst Anna propitiously smiles the goddess of wealth."

The timid heart of Anna beat tremblingly alive to the event of this formidable deed. She had no fears relative to herself, for she had no doubts of De Courcy; but her friend possessed such a superior share of firmness

firmness, in every thing she undertook, that she dreaded, on the affair coming to light, her too hastily advancing her own determination, ere De Courcy's was known; and between his duty and affection, how hard, Anna thought, would be the test of his honour! but that it would bear the sway, she was unalterably convinced, and be his decision what it might, that it would be governed by candour, honour, and justice. The nearer the day approached that was to return the two fondly-expected gentlemen, the more apprehensively beat the bosoms of the awaiting friends. Ah! why should they not? the moment was great with the fate of all, for the happiness of their future lives was connected with its important events.

Lord De Courcy came frequently to Deventon House to pass a few days or weeks, and, with Mr. and Mrs. Grenville, adjust the portentous preliminaries of the pending contract. The last time of his

being there, previous to his son's arrival, there were many close consultations between them, of what nature never transpired; but the watchful, anxious friends entertained no doubt of their important signification; and whilst the debates of the elders went secretly forward at Deventon, those of the friends were as privately adjusted in the Lodge, on the same subject.

By the time the young gentlemens' arrival in Paris was announced to Lord De Courcy, in consequence of their delay of travelling, the major birth-day of his son would pass over, before he could possibly come to England; and his Lordship, who was as concerned for his absence at the time, as he was for the occasion of it, quitted his friends at Deventon, for his seat at Oakley Park, where it was absolutely necessary it should be celebrated with festivity, from De Courcy's being its future heir, and his Lordship having appointed many of the surrounding gentry to meet him

him that day, at a public dinner, of which all his tenants and rustic neighbours had been invited to partake, and were preparing for it, to do honour to their Lord's son, and their future master.

Anna had left her dear, revered patroness one morning, to spend the day with her friend Emily, and had not been a very long time gone, when Mrs. Jeffries, who was in her own room, heard a ring at the gate, and presently after, old William, her butler, talking very smartly to some person in the hall; but she could not distinguish the words, neither did she attempt listening to them, further than as their accidental sound reached her ear; when, in a few minutes, there was a tap at her door, and the venerable servant slowly opened it.

"May I come in, Madam?" asked he: "I wish to speak with you."

The man appeared a little alarmed.

"Yes, William," answered Mrs. Jeffries. "What is it you have to say to me? You look frightened."

He came forward, and closed the door as he entered.

"There is a person below asks to see you, Madam, or my young lady," said William— "and—but don't *you* be frightened —as sure as I am a living man, it is the same woman I saw, one day, in Bloomsbury-square, just before we came down here."

"What woman?" said Mrs. Jeffries; "I don't remember any particular one, William."

William came nearer to her, and, in a low voice, half whispered—"The woman you got Miss Anna from, Madam."

"God Almighty save me!" cried Mrs. Jeffries,

Jeffries, starting up, "can it be possible? You must mistake, William—that woman is surely dead, or we should have heard something of her before now."

"It is her, I'll swear, Madam," replied the man, shaking his white locks: "I could not be mistaken in the person, though it is seventeen years since I saw her, and that only the once—and she is so terribly altered too—but I recollected her voice the moment she spoke."

"What am I to do?" said the good old lady. "I'm afraid to see her, William—afraid of her being insolent, or making an oration about the place. I am very happy Anna is gone out for the day. Do you think I had better go down to her?"

"Indeed I do, Madam," he answered. "But pray, my dear mistress, don't be so terrified"—for she really was—"if the wretch should be impertinent or saucy to you, I'll find a way to silence her, I warrant you, Ma'am."

"Then, as you remember the woman so

well," said Mrs. Jeffries, "I hope you have not forgot the particulars, William?"

"That I have not, Madam," replied he; "and it was no later than the other night, in the housekeeper's room, that Mrs. Glynn and I was talking over the business, and wondering what on earth had come of this very woman, that we had never heard nor seen nothing about her for so many years."

"Let Mrs. Glynn be called also," said Mrs. Jeffries; "and you too stay near me, William, for I'm sadly afraid this woman comes with no good design, and I am not so well able to speak to her now, as I was when I first saw her. Besides," added she, with a heavy sigh, "I have not my dear old companion, at present, to repulse any impertinence that might be offered me."

"No, Madam," cried the hoary domestic, "you have not my good master now, but you have your old servant, and I only wish she may shew an attempt of being saucy to you. Rot me, begging your pardon,

pardon, Madam, if I would not clap the Justice on her back before she knew where she was."

Mrs. Jeffries was really terrified at encountering this creature, though in her own house, and all the servants about her; but her fears were for Anna, and not herself, for she dreaded this woman either came to demand her, or extort money. Of any right to do the former, this Lady had still her doubts; and, whatever the consequences might be, she was positively determined on not complying with any terms, unless that claim was fully and unequivocally proved.

Mrs. Jeffries descended, as William, slipping down the back-stairs, summoned Mrs. Glynn, and they were in the hall as soon as their mistress. There stood a great, tall, coarse, vulgar-looking creature, with her face like a blazing meteor, and her eyes resembling two half-extinguished

squibs. The moment she perceived Mrs. Jeffries, she advanced boldly enough towards her, and made a kind of salute with her head.

"Your sarvant, Ma'am," was her immediate address.

Mrs. Jeffries looked at the woman, but, as William had said, she was so terribly altered, that, excepting a faint idea of her voice, this Lady had no recollection of her.

"Your servant," answered she. "Do you want any thing with me, my good woman?"

"Don't you know me?" said she, with a grinning smirk. "I wants my dater, Ma'am."

"I neither know you or your daughter," replied Mrs. Jeffries. "I don't recollect that I ever saw you before, therefore can know nothing concerning either of you."

"Oh, that's hall a humbug, mistress," she cried, thowing off the smirk, and contracting her black brows into a menacing frown. "You knows me well henuff for all your pretence; hand my dater too—the person they calls Miss Jeferous—that's she I wants."

"Miss Jeffries!" repeated the good lady. "And what have you to say to Miss Jeffries, woman?"

"Woman!" she cried, "woman! I be's as good ah woman has she bee; for she's my hown child, for hall she's a fine lady: but hit's time for her now to come down a bit, hand to do for her poor mother—so I must have her, do you see, hand that's the short hand the long of it. D'y you hear ould man, (to William) call her here to me."

"Why, who are you," cried Mrs. Jeffries, with passion, "that presumes to be so insolent here?"

"Why, who should I be," answered she, raising her tones as loud as the enquirer;

"but Nanny's mother—the little girl you took o' me in Lunnun so many years agone, in one o' them there squares, when she sould you the matches; but I supposes you does not like to remember it, because you took her from me, hand you knows you did, for all I could say hor do again it."

"I don't forget how I got the person you mention," said Mrs. Jeffries; "but it was in a very different manner to what you alledge; neither do I believe you to be the woman; and, if you even are, I candidly tell you, I discredit your being that child's mother."

"Well, there's no huse in hargufyin about the matter," cried she, very saucily; "for hi'll not stir han hinch till I have my dater, hand hi'll take her with me too, hand let me see who dare prevent me."

"And if she is your daughter," exclaimed Mrs. Jeffries, who exerted her spirits, though sadly alarmed at the woman's violence, "which, I tell you again, I don't believe, you have no right to demand her; for

for I bought her of you, and gave you five guineas, in presence of these two persons."

"Aye, that you did," cried Mrs. Glynn; "I remember it very well—and this is the woman, Madam, I recollect her now as well—"

"Hand what supposes you did gi' me five guineas, hor ten, hor twenty heither," said the fury, "hit was not a good bargain; it was not worth that, (snapping her fingers) for I didn't take her to market with a rope habout her neck—so I have a right to my dater, hand will have her, hor know for what."

"Good God!" exclaimed the terrified Mrs. Jeffries, "what am I to do with this woman?"

"Do!" she repeated, "why, call Nanny to me, that's what you'll do, till I takes her wi' me, to earn a bit o' bread for her mother, now she his a woman. Hi'm sure hits time for her to think o' doing something

thing for me, now that I ham not hable to do for myself."

"Miss Jeffries is not here," said Mrs. Glynn, very stoutly, for William had left the hall, to the addition of his lady's terrors; "and if she even was in the house, woman, you should not see her."

"Hand who the devil hare you, you ould hag," cried the wretched creature, setting her elbows akimbo at Mrs. Glynn; "I owes you no talk, so keep your jaw to yourself, hor hi'll make you."

Mrs. Jeffries could bear it no longer; the poor old lady was alarmed almost to fainting. She entered the parlour, but had scarce sat down, when the insolent woman followed her.

"You had better let me have my dater in peace hand quietness, do you see, mistress," cried she; "for hout o' the house hi'll not go without her."

"You

"You have been told that Miss Jeffries is not here, my good woman," said the poor frightened lady, in a tremulous voice; "and I assure you she is not."

"Well then, hand hus hover a few guineas," cried she, "hand hi'll wait, with patience, for her coming home, hand won't say nothing about her; hand order me my dinner, hand a glass o' something."

Mrs. Jeffries was so thoroughly alarmed, both by the woman's threats, and her fears of Anna's return, or having the business exposed all over the country, that she was going to comply with this insolent demand, when Mrs. Glynn, perceiving her motioning her hand to her pocket, cried out—

"Don't give her a farthing, Madam—don't give her a farthing; she only wants to extort money out of you. Let her be insolent if she durst—here's John and Thomas will soon cool her."

"Damn you, hand John hand Thomas together,"

together," cried the virago; "why would you go for to stop the gentlewoman from doing what she knows she has a good right to do? So come, hand hover, my Lady, hand I ham has mute has a mackrel."

"I dare say you will," called out Mrs. Glynn, as she ran as fast as she was able to the hall-door, to admit a gentleman, who was followed by a plain-looking man, and old William.

"Aye," ran on Mrs. Glynn, "I believe you will be mute enough now, my woman; here's some one to quiet you. Walk in, Sir—walk in to the parlour."

"How do you do, Mrs. Jeffries?—how do you do?" said this gentleman entering, sitting down very familiarly, laying his stick on the table, and placing his gloves beside it.

"How do you, Mr. Compton?" said Mrs. Jeffries, assuming her own manner, immediately, at seeing him.

Mr. Compton was a Justice of Peace, and an ear

a near neighbour. She perceived William enter with him, and having remarked his absence, she guessed instantly what he had been about; and she guessed truly. William, finding the woman grow insolent, and not knowing to what length she might extend it, went out, the back way, to this gentleman's house, who was, fortunately, at home, and to whom he briefly related the beginning of the circumstance, with all the particulars attending it, not forgetting the suspicions entertained of her not being mother to the person she claimed as her child. Mr. Compton called for his clerk, and, without further delay, set out, attended by him and the honest old butler.

"Who is this woman?" enquired he, not seeming to know any thing of her. "Eh?—What does she want here?"

"Hi'll call to-morrow habout the business," said she, softening her tone, as if she knew the Justice. "Hi'll call to-morrow, please

please your Ladyship," and she drew near the parlour door.

"You may as well settle it now," said Mrs. Jeffries. "Make your demand before this gentleman; I give you leave to say what you please in his presence."

"I'll make her speak out," cried Mr. Compton, "since you permit it, Mrs. Jeffries. Shut the door, Richards; don't let her out. Well, what's your business here?"

"I wants to see my dater, han please your Worship," said the woman; "but hi'll come again, hif her Ladyship pleases, to-morrow, hor next day."

"Her Ladyship does not please," replied the stern Justice; "she does not want such vagrants as you about the house. And who is your daughter?"

Mrs. Jeffries was going to reply to this question, but he nodded his head to her, as much as to say he knew it all.

"Can

"Can you prove the person you call your daughter, to be, *ipso facto*, your own born child?"

"To be sure I can," replied the woman, stoutly.

"Write it down, Richards," said the Justice; "she can prove it, she says. Are you married?"

"What's that to any body, whether I am or no," she replied very smartly; "many a good body never was."

"Answer my question," cried Mr. Compton, angrily.

"I was married to be sure," said she; "my husband is dead."

"I doubt if ever he was living," cried the Justice. "Where were you married?"

"How hinquisitous you har, Sir," said the woman, who did not much like these interrogatories, and would have been well pleased to steal off; but William and Mrs. Glynn kept guard at the door.

"Answer my question," cried Mr. Compton,

ton, "or I'll make you. Where were you married?"

"Why, hif you must know," said she, looking very surly at him, "I was married hin Norwood Forest."

"Damn me," exclaimed the Justice, "if you was not a gipsey, and an arrant one you seem to be at this moment. I suppose you jumped over two cross sticks —Eh?"

"That's nothing to nobody whether I was hor not," cried the fortune-telling dame, "hor what I jumped hover. I wants my lawful right, hand I must have it."

"And so you shall," said his Worship, significantly; "you shall have your right, I promise you."

"Thank your honour," she cried. "So, do you hear, Madam Jeferous, produce my dater; for she his my right, hand I must have it, his Worship says."

"So you shall, I tell you," replied he; "damn

"damn me if you shall not. I'll take care of that."

The woman shewed her great white teeth, as she grinned exultingly at Mrs. Glynn. She did not understand the extent of the Justice's meaning, or she would not have looked so triumphant; for he perceived, at the first glance, that she was no other than a vagrant, and he was determined to commit her till she gave an account of herself: but he wanted to get as much information first as he could.

"Well," continued Mr. Compton, "you were married in Norwood Forest, you say. How long since?"

"More nor twenty years agone," was her answer.

"And what business was your husband, eh?" said he. "The same profession as yourself, I suppose—one of the cunning ones?"

"He

"He was cunning henuff," cried she; "for hall that I tricked him, han the whole tribe, afor I was five months married."

"Ah! I thought you were a cunning one," said the Justice. "So, you left him for somebody else, I presume?"

Mrs. Jeffries looked at William and Mrs. Glynn. She did not speak, but they understood what she meant. He pulled an old tattered memorandum-book from out of his pocket, and, opening it, gave it to his mistress, in which were written down the particulars of this woman's first meeting with her, and the account she had given of herself, and her husband having enlisted for a soldier. Mrs. Jeffries kept the book in her hand.

"How many children had you?" asked Mr. Compton; "or had you ever any?"

"Two," replied the woman, "a boy hand a girl."

"The

"The devil you had!" cried his Worship; "and you but five months married! Well, when were they born?"

"Why hall the questions your Worship haxes me?" said she, getting surly again. "What matter to hany body how long hor how short ha time I was married—I had the childen."

"But if you want your right," cried Mr. Compton, "you must answer me. When and where were those two children born?"

"Hand what has them to say to the purpose?" she asked. "They was nothing to nobody but myself."

"Reply to my questions," exclaimed Mr. Compton. "I'm a Justice of the Peace, woman, and I'll make you do so by foul means, if you won't by fair."

"Lord, how *obstroperous* your Worship is," cried she. "Why, the boy was born'd in Lunnun town, ha little after I left my husband, hand the rest o' them; hand the girl was not born'd for five or six years hafter, down there hip Brantford. She was a poor

a poor sickly thing, hand I never could get no good o' her; but the boy was has fine a fellow has hever was looked hat. He's halive still, and living with ha gemmen, has his servant, hin one o' them fine squares hin Lunnen, but I can't tell the name o' it, because I does not know it. So now your Worship has the whole story."

"And this child, that was born at *Bramford*, died there, you say," said Mr. Compton, looking stedfastly at her.

"No, I did not say that," she replied; "no, I did not say no such thing, for I could not. She died hin Lunnun, when she was ten months ould, hand glad henuff I was when she was gone, for she was as troublesome ha brat has ever a poor woman had; hand, thank God, I never had no more o' them."

Mrs. Jeffries laid the tattered memorandum before Mr. Compton, which he looked over. The woman was certainly either frightened in to speak the truth, or had forgot

forgot herself; and the tale she had told so many years back to that lady, had evidently gone out of her memory, as it possibly might have done those to whom she had related it, if it had not been minutely set down by William, immediately after his mistress had given him and Mrs. Glynn so particular a charge to note it; and they now found the benefit of it: for that Anna was not her child, was at present beyond a doubt; but to discover whose she was must not be an easy matter, Mrs. Jeffries thought, after such an interval of time elapsing.

"And now," said Mr. Compton, when he had perused the memorandum, "you shall have your right, my honest woman, for you have proved yourself entitled to it. Have you noted all this down, Richards?" to the clerk, who sat writing at the table. "Very right. Let me there now." He took the pen in his hand. The clerk wrote something which the Justice whispered him to do, and he signed it. "Here now—

here is your right—a mittimus to commit you to Exeter jail. Damn me but that's your right in full."

The woman was confounded; all her impudence could not support her up against this unlooked for and unexpected explanation of the promise of giving her her right. She cried—she expostulated—said "she would never be seen there again, did his Worship but let her go off—that she would not ask hafter her dater any more, nor ever say a word habout her;" and it was not until Mr. Compton threatened severity to her, that she could be got out of the house, when, with Richards, William, and one of the men servants, she was taken off to Exeter, where Mrs. Jeffries was preparing to follow, with the Justice, and the remaining evidences, to commit the woman. It was not without very great repugnance that Mrs. Jeffries admitted of this business becoming so public, as it now of course must; and the exposing the delicate-

cate-minded Anna to general observation, was not the least of her regret; but the hope of seeing that sweet girl proved of more respectable connexions than the vile creature who claimed her, filled that lady's mind with the agreeable prospect of having her long harboured suspicions cleared up, and her beloved Anna's relieved from the sole reflection which had through life hung heavy on it.

Mrs. Jeffries drove up to Deventon House. Emily and Anna were seated together as she entered. The late unexpected scene had so ruffled the weak spirits of that good old gentlewoman, it was not in a moment they could be restored to their usual placidity; and she wore the traces of her recent flurry, and her present very surprising business, blended together, in her countenance. Anna noticed it instantly.

"My beloved friend!" she cried, start-

ing forwards and catching the hand of Mrs. Jeffries—"why these alarmed looks?—has any thing happened?—you are not ill, or you would not be out? Dearest Madam, speak—has any thing occurred at home?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Jeffries; "but nothing alarming, my love. You know I am old and infirm, Anna, therefore unable to bear up against the most trifling occurrence out of my general line; yet a circumstance, very unlooked for, *has* taken place: but do not you be alarmed, my dear girl; it will, I trust, prove a fortunate one in its termination, although its immediate concerns will not be found very pleasing. It relates to you."

Anna turned pale as death; the thought which was ever foremost to her mind, now superceded every other. She sunk, nearly fainting, into a chair, as she tremblingly articulated—"My mother!"

Mrs.

Mrs. Jeffries took her hand.

"Yes, my love," continued the good lady, tenderly, to her; "she has indeed come forward, after so many years of silence; but, my Anna, the name she claimed, she has no right to; her own confession has betrayed her; and to develop the mystery of her conduct, and remove the long impending cloud over you, is the important business of this moment."

"Mrs. Jeffries then related the past transaction as it happened, and the necessity of their following the woman to Exeter, for her committal; for which purpose Mr. Compton and Mrs. Glynn waited to accompany them."

"I shall attend you also," cried Emily. "Let my Anna rise or fall, my station is by her side, through every situation in life."

Anna had been dreadfully alarmed, and shocked at the idea of appearing before a

public court; but, supported by her kind benefactress at one side, and her beloved friend at the other, she summoned up her fortitude to meet the tremendous ordeal. It was the decision of an event which had given many torturing reflections to her bosom; and, in considering the happy consequences which might arise from it, she resigned herself to Heaven and her anxious friends, and with a beating heart set out with them for Exeter.

The sitting magistrate at Exeter was Sir James Stanton, as much noted for his justice as he was feared for his austerity: He was the terror of the country round; yet no delinquent ever came before him who did not depend more on his humanity than his own evasion, which generally brought the truth before him, and to which he was as lenient as the cause would admit of; but, to a false attestation, he was equally severe and rigorous.

The

The ladies were introduced into the jury-room, where Mr. Compton wrote down a full statement of the business, which, together with the woman's examination, and the old memorandum, he gave into the Justice's hands. A short cause was going forward in the court, which, when over, the clerk summoned the parties forward. Anna again felt her fortitude relaxing, and the auxiliaries of Emily were obliged to be on the alert to revive it. The ladies were all known to Sir James, but particularly Emily, he being well acquainted with Mr. Grenville; and a bench near him was appropriated to their use, with a second, adjoining them, for Mrs. Glynn and William. The court was tolerably well cleared, and the woman called up; she did not appear quite so formidable as when Mrs. Jeffries saw her first that morning; yet the natural audacity of her looks was not to be entirely repelled by the stern countenance of the Judge. He eyed her with no favourable aspect, as he commenced his

interrogations, by a number of questions not immediately connected with the business, to some of which she gave bold replies, and to others had little or nothing to say, particularly when he asked, could she produce any evidence in favour of her character?—to that question she was, to use her own expression, "as mute as a mackerel;" and the Justice went on.

Q. "You demand, as your own child, a person known by the name of Anna Jeffries?"

A. "I do, han please your Worship."

Q. "Did you, or did you not, give that person, when a child, seventeen years ago, to the lady who still has her, freely and voluntarily?"

No answer, and he repeated the query; adding—

"Were you not satisfied to take for her the sum of five guineas, and resign all future claim to the child?"

A. "I did

A. "I did get the money."

Q. "And you gave the child?"

A. "Yes."

Q. "You come now to demand her as your lawful property?"

Another silence. The Justice put the question a second time to the woman.

A. "My hown child his my lawful property, to be sure."

Q. "How old is the said Anna at present?"

A. "I can't tell hexactly. She may be the matter o' nineteen or twenty."

Q. "Where was she born?"

No answer. It was repeated.

A. "Born—why, she was born hin—hin—"

"No equivocation," cried the angry Magistrate; "no equivocation, woman. You

can't be ignorant of the birth-place of your *own* child."

A. "She was born hin—hin Lunnun."

Sir James took up the papers.

"Here is your late examination, before Mr. Compton, wherein you confess to have had only two children; one, a boy—mind, woman—a boy, born in *Lunnun*, and the other, a girl, born in *Brantford*, but thirteen or fourteen years ago, and which girl died at the age of ten months. Now, by your own account, you had but one child, a boy, at the time you passed this said Anna for your daughter: And, Mrs. Polly Wilkins, if you can make two children out of one, and produce your claim to a child of your's, that never was in existence, I'll say you are the cleverest woman of your kind that ever stood at a bar."

The woman hesitated a while, and perceived

ceived she had confounded herself; but her assurance did not quit her; she laid her claim on a new foundation, which entangled her yet more.

"Why, hif your Worship must have the truth o' it, Nanny was born afore I was married."

"Vile woman!" cried the enraged Justice, "do you think I'm to be fooled by your infernal lies? Here, here is the evidence against you," rapping his finger on the paper. "It is twenty years since, you say, you were married, and you acknowledge the person in question to be hardly twenty years of age—what have you to say for yourself now? I'll tell you what I'll say though—if you do not confess the truth directly, by the Lord I'll hang you up without further ceremony; and, to shew you I am in earnest—here, clerk, order a rope! By Heavens, you shall squeak in earnest, since you won't speak."

"Hi'll tell your Worship!" she cried out, shaking with terror. "I will, indeed I will!"

"Begin then," said he, looking fiercely at her, "and no prevarication. There's the halter."

"Ho, do, your Worship, take it out o' my sight," said she, imploringly. "Ho, do, good Sir, hor I can't speak a word."

It was ordered to be laid on one side.

"And now," asked the Justice, "whose child is the person you claim as your's?"

A. "Hindeed I does not know a word habout whose child she be."

"That's another lie, I'm sure," cried he. "Where did you get her?"

A. "I stol'd her haway."

"I believe the truth is coming out now," said he. "From where did you steal her?"

A. "I stol'd her from *Euse* Castle."

The

The affinity of sound operated on the Justice's ear as *your*, and he half rose up, in a passion, crying out—

"That's another cursed lie! Woman, woman, how dur'st you say such a thing to me? I never had a castle in my life."

A. "I don't care whether you had hor no. You tould me to speak the truth, hand you won't believe me; but I takes my haffidavy I did steal her haway from Euse Castle."

"Bring the halter," called out the enraged Judge. "No, no, she shall stand in the pillory first, for perjury, before she's hanged. I tell you I never was owner of a castle in my life, nor any of my family, that ever I heard of."

"Hand who the devil cares habout it?" replied the woman, very saucily; who, now that she really was confessing the truth, grew stout on the business. "Hand who the devil cares for your family, hif they *was* all in the pillories together. I say I did steal the child from the place they calls

Euse Castle, down below there hin Yorkshire."

Emily leaned forward.

"There is such a place," said she; "I know it, and have been there."

"There now, your Worship," cried the prisoner, nodding her head at him, "you see hi'm not telling lies. Now what have you to say for clapping me into the pillories because I tould the truth? Hand I did not steal the child heither, huntil I was desired to do it; hand had gotten twenty yellow guineas hin my hand for doing it; hand she was the prettysomest creature I hever looked at, hand that the ould lady hover there knows, Mrs. Jefrous; hand hif I had not thought hit a pity to spile her white skin, hi'd a rub'd her hover wi' walnut-juice, hand that would a made it the colour o' that man's face beyont there," pointing to the Justice's clerk, who happened to be of a remarkable dingy complexion. The creature's

creature's assurance caused many of the assembly to smile, but the Justice looked round him sternly, and the smile was suppressed.

Eure Castle—Heaven! what a complication of wonderful ideas could not this discovery afford to the astonished senses of the interested auditors, had not more substantial events left no time for maintaining mysterious conjecture.

"Come," cried the Justice; "since you have confessed this much, begin the story, and go regularly through it."

The woman, waiting a few moments to recollect herself, proceeded as she was ordered.

"Hit his more than twenty years hover since I was concerned wi' the gipseys, hand we hused to go habout the country, has I supposes your Worship knows well henuff what

what we do to hearn a bit o' honest bread."

"Aye, aye, I know what the plundering, canting tribe can do very well," replied he; "many a one of them I have had whipped out of the town, and you amongst the number, for what I can tell."

A. "I never was whipped, please your Worship, but when I was going to school, and the mistress could not get me to learn a genteel prononcification."

"From your education," cried Sir James, "we can all tell what it has been, without any of your scientific profession to inform us. You see, you could not discover by it yourself, that you were near being hanged. You have not escaped yet, perhaps, if you don't stick to the truth. Go on with your story."

A. "So we comes up to this great Castle, once, your Worship, hand we lived ourselves in the fine woods habout it for many a day; hand there I met a fine man, who used to give me some money, now and

agen,

agen, to tell him his fortin, hand bits o' broken meat at the ould buildin, when I went up there. But he haxed me one time, hafter a great deal o' talk, would I do him a kindness, for which he'd cross my hand wi' twenty golden shiners? so, to be sure, I says I would; hand he bids me steal haway one o' the childer I hused to see walk hout wi' the nurse, hand take myself hoff from the rest o' the gang to Lunnun. The money was tempting, but the childer was so well watched, I did not know how to go habout it; but he said, he would contrive it hall when I was ready; hand so he did, for when the childer was playing habout, he, I supposes, had the woman in talk, hand I slips hup the little girl, for hit was she he bid me take, claps her hunder my cloak, hand away I sets hoff wi' her has fast has my legs could carry me, wi' my twenty yellow boys tied hup hin the corner o' the rag of a handkerchief I had round my neck; hand I meets the waggon going hup to town, so hin hit I gets, hand come safe

to

to Lunnun, without hever hearing nothing more habout the business."

The woman paused here, and the Justice remained some moments reflecting on what she had said.

"Gracious Providence!" thought Emily, "where will this astonishing account lead to?"

Poor Anna had no thoughts; she was wrapped in wonder and attention, without having power to collect any other sense.

"Pray," said he, again addressing the woman, "did you know the man who bribed you to steal the child?"

A. "Why I know'd who he was well henuff, your Worship, for there was not so many o' them there hat at the Castle; honly a couple o' sarving men, hand *two* hould bodies, like them two parsons hover yonder, (nodding towards Mrs. Glynn and William)

William) but not quite so strucken in years; though, hif they bees halive now, I don't believe they be much better good for: hand him that ga' me the money was some great man to the Lord there—I believe some singer-man, for they called him *Faddle di Chanter*, hand his name was *Nugint*."

"Nugent, Nugent," repeated the Justice; "I know that name, I think. Well, and who was the Lord of the Castle, and was he there at the time?"

A. "He was call'd the Lord Wat—Water. No, that was not the name heither; there was hanother hod one before hit."

Emily again leaned forward.

"Fitzwalter," said she.

A. "Yes, my Lady, that was the very name, hand they did say he was at the Castle then, but I never seed him has I know'd; but I did believe that two o' the childer was his own, hor some kin to the great folks hof it; for there was honother little boy,

boy, the nurse's hown, I thinks, but them two was halways finer drest. Hand the little girl had gold hinges hin her red shoes, hand a bunch o' gold bells by her side, with a cherry-coloured spout to 'em, just for hall the world, your Worship, like the nose of a bellows."

Q. "And what did you do with those things?"

A. "I sold them, please your Honour, to one o' them Jewdish men, wi' the goat's beard hupon their chin—hall but a collar she had round her neck, which I know'd was a charm hagain bad things, so I keeps hit halways habout myself."

"And, you unfortunate creature," cried the Justice, "how could you think there was any virtue in it, when it had not power to keep you from the infant? Produce it."

She took a pair of large old scissars, that hung to her side from a piece of dirty tape, and, ripping up a piece of her petticoat, drew from thence a small amber necklace, which

which she handed to the clerk, and he gave it Sir James.

Q. "Did those children live in the Castle?"

A. "No, your Worship, they lived hin a place near hit, they call the Wood-house, wi' the nurse woman."

Q. "Do you recollect her name?"

The woman reflected awhile, and then said—"I thinks hit was Mary Jenkins, hor some such like. She was hown dater, I knows, to the hould woman hat the Castle, Mrs. Margarette. I remember her very well; for many o' time she crossed my hand, to read the line o' life hin her palm: hand I know'd how to come hover her, when I wanted a drop o' the good ale. I hused to tell her, she'd live to be three times has hould as she was, hand I was sure to have hit, hif the tother hould man was not hin the way—Mr. Robert, the *Stewer*. He was hup to hall hour tricks, hand would not

not let one o' us near the place hif he could help hit."

"I believe," said Sir James, "you are telling nothing but the truth at present; and this is a business of most material consequence."

Emily addressed herself to him, saying—

"The woman does indeed speak the truth. The old pair, she has just mentioned, reside still in the Castle; as does the nurse, Mary Jenkins, in the Woodhouse."

"You say you have been there, Miss Grenville?" cried the Justice. "Have you heard such a business spoken of? The stealing of a child, any way connected with the Castle, could not be lightly passed over, or easily forgotten. Had Lord Fitzwalter any children, or infant relatives, to answer their description?"

Emily replied—"I never heard such a circumstance spoken of; but there were such

such children at that time, to whom his Lordship was uncle, by marriage. They were the twin orphans of Mr. Villeroy, the brother of Lady Fitzwalter, whose death, with that of his wife, within a short period of each other, left the boy and girl, with an immense fortune, to the guardianship of Lord Fitzwalter; but those children also died of an infectious disorder, in their infancy, by which his Lordship became the possessor of their great wealth. Therefore the child that was stolen could not have been one of those."

"Both died!" said the Justice. "How were their deaths ascertained, Madam?"

A. "Lord Fitzwalter was, at the time it happened, at the Castle. The children caught the small-pox from the nurse's son, who survived it himself, and is still living."

Sir James leaned over the table for some time, in deep meditation.

"This is a very wonderful, and a most mysterious

mysterious affair," cried he, addressing the ladies. "It must be investigated to the foundation, for it wears the face of a most iniquitous transaction; and those three persons at the Castle, the old man, the nurse, and her mother, must be cited to appear before us. It will be a work of time, but it shall be investigated; and I wish it were possible to find the fellow who gave the bribe, but, at this distance of time, it can hardly be hoped for. Do you, Miss Grenville, give the exact direction, and names of those persons, whom I will have summoned up, and the parties present shall have due notice for their future appearance. This woman I hold in custody—but don't be frightened—I am not going to do any harm to you. It is only for your evidence I detain you, and you shall be very well taken care of, I promise you."

"And," said Emily, "I must also request that the persons summoned from the Castle be attended to, in the journey, with every possible care and convenience; the old

old steward particularly, who is not well able to bear fatigue; and it would grieve Lady Fitzwalter did she know her faithful servant was not well taken care of. They must be allowed to travel at their own leisure; and, in her Ladyship's name, I answer for any expence that is necessary to establish their ease and their comfort on the road."

"One question more," said the Justice to the woman. "How did it happen you came to part with the child, after all the money you must have had from the things you sold belonging to her?"

A. "Hit did not last hover same month, your Worship, hand when it was gone I went wi' the child habout to sell matches, hand tell the sarvant maids' fortunes, when sometimes I'd get a few ha'pence, hand a bit for her, hand sometimes nothing ha' tall, hand we was both bad henuff hoff—but what could I do with the pretty thing? So, when her Ladyship, hover there, hoffered to take her, I thought it was a fine

thing, has to be sure it was, both for her hand myself; but when Mrs. Jefrous gi' me the money, I did not know but it would be better o' me not to go near her hagain, for fear she might change her mind; but I puts the direction she ga' me, safe hup hinto my hould trash bag; so, when I comes to look at it, a year hor two hafter, there I found hit, your Worship, hall in mummery—hand I was very poor to be sure, hand I thought hif I know'd where the place was, I would get something, but I could not find hit hout till the tother day, has I was a charing hin a house in Lunnun, I hears the gemmen o' it hax one o' his people, was the things packed hup to go to Mrs. Jefrous, hin Devonshire; so I recollects the name directly, hand hoff I sets, hand, for cartain, the moment the hould man there came to the door, I know'd him hat once—hand I thought, that by haxing for my dater, they would do something decentish for myself. Hand now, your Worship has the whole story."

"And

"And if you had been civil," said the Justice, "it is probable that something would have been done for you, though, as this business is so very momentous to the young lady herself, it has happened for the better that you were not. You may retire now, and there's a person will bring you to the place you are to remain in for some time, until we can settle this affair in a clearer light."

The woman seemed somewhat apprehensive at being detained, or at meeting with some punishment, and Sir James was obliged to assure her, on his honour, that nothing of the kind was intended, for, on the contrary, she would be better treated than she deserved; and Anna, pulling out her purse, gave her five guineas, with her promise of doing something for her hereafter. She withdrew then very quietly, the court broke up, and the ladies returned home, astonished, wondering, and doubting —

Anna, in state of mind which could meet no parallel, and Emily, under that of ambiguous perplexity, whether or not to give the final stamp to her opinion, in the irrefragable decree of Lord Fitzwalter's character; but it was a deed of such magnitude, that she dared not implicate him in its extent, till undoubted proof gave positive conviction to present appearances, and unveiled a secret of so many years mysterious concealment.

A business of so public a nature as this had become, could not be kept concealed from the inhabitants round Deventon, and it was told by the parties themselves, at their return, to Mr. and Mrs. Grenville. The moment that lady understood it, she seemed to adopt the sentiments of her daughter; but it was of too delicate a nature to afford an open declaration of them, and they were kept within their own breasts, even from the person whose right-

ful

ful claim hung so interestingly doubtful; and from Lady Fitzwalter every particular of the transaction was cautiously avoided, and every care taken to prevent its reaching her knowledge, until the event of it determined in what proportion it would be found to operate on her feelings.

CHAP. IV.

Oh, peaceful days, that saw me in my father's house—in my native fields! Ye smiling fields!—ye vallies made for enthusiasm to wander in!—will ye never breathe on this burning bosom your gales of peace and joy?

ROSSEAU.

THE arrival of De Courcy and Arthur was now eagerly looked for; the ladies awaited to hear of it with impatience; but Anna's mind was tortured with a variety of contending emotions, as she wished, yet feared, the return of De Courcy, until the eventful cause, which decreed her birthright, was finally terminated. She had become by it an object of public curiosity: every eye was directed to her, every ear ready

ready to receive the eventful intelligence. She was no longer known as the relative of her benefactors; she could no longer claim a right to the name of Jeffries. The transaction was spoken of as a deed of iniquity, and Anna the subject of pity; yet, whilst the affair was suspended in doubt and oblivion, no opinion could be formed; but she was well aware the moment of its decision would prove the criterion of the world's estimation. If proved of respectable origin, she would be followed and caressed; if otherwise, she would be considered as an insignificant being—the possessor of a fortune she had no right to—and which, though it would place her independent of its frowns or smiles, it would not give to her respect. Whilst De Courcy believed her birth inscrutable to the search of curiosity, he generously waved her scruples respecting it, by considering it a subject of no consideration; but now that an open discovery had attracted the world's attention to its final determination, would

he not decline forming an alliance, if the meanness of it would render him equally liable to public censure, which it might think itself justifiable in attaching to a union so much beneath him? Yet, should it even prove so, she could not condemn De Courcy, for declining to form a connexion, which could only disgrace him in the eyes of the world, and expose him to the resentment of his father and his friends for ever. His honour was as dear to her as her own, and rather than forfeit either, she would be content to hide herself in obscurity the remainder of her life. The vision fancy, however, floated before her sometimes with bright hope, when, considering the evidence of this woman, she brought to mind the rich ornaments which she had confessed to have got about the child, and were proofs of its being respectably, if not richly, connected. Yet, again, Anna's mind wandered in doubtful maze. Was she that child?—Might not the same woman have exchanged it for another?—Might not that

one

one be dead, and the story made up for one of her own, or one of equally mean extraction? Alas! Anna was bewildered—she knew not what to think, or where to fix conjecture; and, with the anxiety of a criminal, who awaited the award of his fate for life or death, did she look forward to the decision of her's.

Lady Fitzwalter, who lived almost at Deventon House, considered her own elegant little Lodge, adjoining, as merely her place of visiting, and only went there at intervals to see that every thing was right, and her small number of domestics comfortably disposed. Her Ladyship walked over there, one morning, with her two inseparables, Emily, and her sweet Anna, where they had not been any length of time, when a servant brought to his mistress an unsealed note, which, he said, an answer was waited to by a lady. Lady Fitzwalter opened it hastily, and found it an incoherent appeal to her compassion,

written with a pencil, by the female who asked of her protection and relief, in a situation of pressing necessity. Her Ladyship's benevolent soul expanded to the distresses of a fellow creature, particularly one of her own sex, and she flew to bestow the assistance so pathetically entreated; and that it was no common applicant, the note she held (however hastily dictated) plainly evinced. A female rested on one of the hall chairs, whose form was concealed by a large cloak, but whose reclining attitude was expressive of sorrow. On hearing the approach of footsteps she turned her head, and the paper Lady Fitzwalter still held in her hand, informed the stranger it was her that advanced. She arose from her seat, and met that lady with a dignity which fixed her in mute attention, and throwing back her cloak, discovered a face and figure that *united* every faculty in admiration. The former displayed transcendent beauty meliorated by misfortunes; for dignity marked her brow, as melancholy

choly shaded the lustre beneath: the latter towered majestically, and shewed she would soon become a mother. Her youth, her unparalleled beauty, and her elegance, proved her to be of a superior order; and when Lady Fitzwalter had recovered from her first emotions of surprise and astonishment, she threw open a door leading to a small parlour, and with a respect, which seemed to receive, rather than confer a favour, requested to know how she could be of service to her?

The stranger, whose accent proclaimed her a foreigner, though she spoke English tolerably well, answered her Ladyship, that she was, from a series of misfortunes, thrown, friendless, on the world, a stranger to the country she was in, and an alien from her own, without the means of procuring assistance in a situation she most required it; that she was born to a better fate, had not an imprudent and clandestine marriage deprived her of all hope, by any application

to her family or friends; and most earnestly entreated her Ladyship, whose benevolent and humane character she had availed herself of, to admit her to some shelter till she gave birth to her infant, when she hoped to resign an existence her own unhappy credulity had made wretched. The tears and anguish which accompanied this address, spoke, most eloquently, to the feelings of Lady Fitzwalter, and her appearance bespoke her of a rank equal, perhaps more exalted than her own. She sought not, by any ill-placed curiosity, to develop more of her story than the stranger seemed desirous of making known; but, with a delicacy peculiar to a noble mind, assured the interesting appealer of her protection, that the house she was in should be her asylum as long as she found it her convenience, and that no person belonging to it should be acquainted with any circumstance that could tend to lessen her consequence, or distress her feelings. The thanks of the interesting stranger were adequate

adequate to her appearance; she was grateful without servility, and accepted the generous offer with a grace of expression, that shewed her versed in the theory and practice of refined manners.

Lady Fitzwalter considered the misfortunes of this elegant female to have been of a peculiar nature, to place so young and so beautiful a creature in such a predicament, in a foreign country, as to be obliged to have recourse to a stranger for a sheltering asylum; but, too generous, and too liberal minded, to judge them arising from any guilty cause of her own, she rather attributed them to the person for whom she had most probably resigned her friends and her rank: and having too much reason to think, from the conduct of her own husband, that another's might be as unkind, her Ladyship doubly felt for the afflictions of this lady, who, in a strange kingdom, was, most possibly, deserted and abandoned by her's.

The

The strange lady gave no mention of her name to Lady Fitzwalter, neither did her Ladyship ask to know it; but she gave directions to her servants to obey her commands, and, fixing her own abode at Deventon House, she left her in possession of the Lodge, whither she went, with her young friends, twice or thrice each day to visit her, but did not present those ladies until the stranger had assented to receiving them. They returned, at each succeeding interview, more attracted to the lovely foreigner, whose mind seemed impressed with some heavy calamity, and frequently would she start from her reverie, impatiently calling on her father and mother, yet carefully concealing their name or station. She would seize the hand of Lady Fitzwalter, emphatically exclaiming—

"You are an angel, my friend!—Your prayers will be heard!—I dare not pray! —Oh, then pray for me, that my parents' curse may be averted!—Oh, mercy, Heaven, has it not already reached me?—Yes, yes—they

they have execrated me—it attends me—I am abandoned by God and my parents—and I am lost for ever."

She would then throw herself on her knees, and pulling out her beads, waved her hand, to be left alone, when she would count them over with streaming eyes, till exhausted by weeping, and prostrate penitence, she sunk on the floor, overwhelmed with agony and despair.

At these moments, the ladies would, sometimes, obey her silent injunctions; at others, endeavour to tranquillize her deeply wounded mind, by exerting their endeavours to console and sooth it.

Lady Fitzwalter would address herself, in fervent expressions, to the great Deity, for comfort to the wretched mourner; she would implore his forgiveness for the offending penitent child, and beseech of him to soften the parents' hearts against pronouncing

nouncing the dreadful imprecation which their unhappy daughter so agonizingly apprehended.

The fervour of her prayers would meliorate the anguish of the poor stranger's lacerated bosom, and she would throw herself on that of Lady Fitzwalter, whilst her flowing tears expressed her gratitude for the comfort she bestowed.

"From you—from you," would she exclaim, "I do not deserve it! Oh, Lady Fitzwalter!—my preserver!—my guardian angel!—didst thou know my story, thou wouldst also drive me from thee. It will be known yet, when laid in my peaceful tomb—soon may I be so, for out of it all peace is at an end."

The corroding grief of the lovely stranger's mind promised her that peace ere long, yet to preserve it from sinking beneath its pressure, was the study of the fair friends.

friends. They wished to bring her into their society at Deventon, but to their request, on that head, she gave a negative reply. Their company at the Lodge was a sweet consolation to her afflictions, but she never wished to go beyond its doors. In their presence, she attained composure; in their absence, she devoted her time to solitude and her beads.

The ladies had paid their usual visit to the fair stranger one morning, and returned to dinner at Deventon, where, with the family, they found the worthy Mrs. Jeffries; and scarcely were they seated in the drawing-room, Emily and Anna together at one of the windows, when they perceived a coach and four drive up to the house, from which a young gentleman sprung.

"De Courcy!" screamed out Emily, and was flying to meet him, when, looking at Anna, she beheld her colour fade. She re-seated herself.

"Anna,

"Anna, my love," whispered she, "collect yourself; consider my father is present, and betray no weakness which could create suspicion—I will give De Courcy the same caution."

The door flew open, and De Courcy entered.

"Welcome — welcome," issued from every tongue. Mr. Grenville shook his hand; his wife embraced him. Mrs. Jeffries followed her example; and he pressed the cheek of Lady Fitzwalter with his lips. Emily threw herself into his arms.

"My dear Emily!"

"My dear De Courcy!" cried she, aloud; and, lowering her voice, added, "be not more particular to Anna; I have reasons for it, you shall know hereafter."

He smiled his observance to her desire as he turned to the trembling girl, folding her in his arms as he had done Emily.

"My

"My dear Anna!" he exclaimed; and softly whispering—"My Anna! my love! —your Henry is returned, your own for ever."

She could not speak—she did not attempt it; but her tremors told him she was also his own faithful Anna.

"And now," cried De Courcy, "I must introduce to you my friend. I'll not bespeak your approbation, he shall do that himself."

He withdrew, and returned instantly, leading the graceful, majestic-looking Arthur; but hardly had they advanced within the door, when a piercing shriek issued from Lady Fitzwalter, and—

"Oh! God of Mercy!—who is it I see?"

She fixed her eyes on Arthur, and clasping her hands together, viewed him as if she would penetrate to his soul.

"Eternal

"Eternal powers!" continued she, "I was compelled to make an oath on earth, but it was sealed in Heaven. I have kept it sacred. This moment annuls it. The son of Villeroy is before me."

Consternation dwelt on every face, and amazement rooted every beholder.

"You may all think me mad," she went on. "I am not, though every sense has wrung with agony. I am yet mistress of my reason. Emily—Anna—ye witnessed a scene which harrowed up every faculty of your souls. You beheld me for days, weeks, a breathing statue of despair—every sense, but that of sorrow, annihilated. You felt for the agonies you could not relieve, and which I was decreed to endure without daring to give utterance to—*but* what were *your* feelings compared to *mine?* Your visit to Eure Castle wound up the climax of my miseries, my horror, and my abhorrence. The memorable papers you brought

brought me from thence, Anna, contained, amongst those I had sent for, the correspondence of two monsters—can I call them men, though one of them *was* my husband? I renounce the name of wife to him eternally—and by what title shall I distinguish him, to bear resemblance to the enormity of his guilt? Those papers told me, that to become master of Villeroy's fortune, he had thrown off every sentiment that could dignify man, and made victims of the twin heirs, to satiate his ambitious views."

A cry of horror ran through the astonished auditors. Lady Fitzwalter appeared as a new created being. The glance of her eye, her attitude, her energetic manner, sunk to their hearts, as her words penetrated to their souls. She continued her discourse—

"Fitzwalter—the uncle and guardian of Villeroy's children; he laid his plans; he put

put them into execution. I was first lured from their side; the faithful servant of their father followed. The infants were left to the protection of his own creatures, whom I fatally depended on—the vile Margarette, and the base nurse, her daughter. They, together, secreted the children; reported their death; imposed on me by a plausible story; and Fitzwalter enjoyed the spoils of his villainy."

Arthur—the wonder, horror-struck Arthur, was advancing to speak. Her Ladyship waved her hand for silence, and proceeded herself.

"Those papers laid open the accursed deed—the children of Villeroy lived, while dead to the world. Oh, God! my jarring soul stood suspended over the nefarious detail; my blood curdled in my veins: they dropt from my nerveless fingers, as the voice of one of their authors sounded on my ear; and I knew no more till I found myself

myself supported in his arms — in *his* arms — they were like the deadly sting of a scorpion. I rushed from them, but horror had transfixed my tongue; I could only point to where the scattered papers lay about the room and table."

'You have read them, Madam, I find?' said he. 'I see what has caused your fainting, but attend to what I say, Lady Fitzwalter, and at your peril obey me.'

"Oh!" cried she, pausing a while, ere she again went on—"I cannot repeat the scene that followed. Fitzwalter found I knew all, and he made me take an oath of such dreadful import, that the recollection chills to my soul, never to betray the secret till the son of Villeroy was produced. Tremendous God of mercy!" continued her Ladyship, sinking on her knees, "thou knowest the heart that was compelled to bow to a villain's authority. No sooner did the dreadful vow pass my lips, than I felt the vital spark of existence congeal within me—every sense was annihilated

lated—life hovered on the brink of eternity—yet, even then, when I believed myself fast hastening to the presence of my Great Master, the agonies of death were unthought of, as I believed the dreadful secret would descend with me to the tomb. Had I died then, Fitzwalter's triumph was complete; but Heaven is wise, merciful, and just. I live to confound him—my oath is cancelled—the son of Villeroy appears. If, in existence, there he stands—his father's image, engraven on my soul, never to be erased."

Arthur was most violently agitated, and had scarcely power to raise the trembling form of Lady Fitzwalter from where she had knelt—as he did, she caught his hand.

"Speak—speak, I conjure you," cried she. "Tell me what name you are known by, and who you are known for? Disguise not the truth, be it what it will."

"It shall be only the truth I will reply

to your questions, Madam," answered Arthur. "Alas! Lady Fitzwalter, that I should have, unhappily, come in your presence, to waken the afflictions of your bosom, and add to, instead of diminishing them. I am not the person you think, but one who is fatally ordained to give another pang to your bosom."

He paused—he knew not how to proceed.

"Go on," she cried; "if my heart is not a faithful monitor—if my eyes are not true to the perfect resemblance of an adored brother—then tell me what you will, I shall give credit to it; I will disbelieve the evidence of my past senses, and think all that happened was but the fever of a heated imagination."

"Then, Madam," resumed he, "whatever might have been intended for the destruction of the infants, it was prevented being practised. They *did die*—for in me you behold the unfortunate author of their untimely

timely fate—me, Lady Fitzwalter, Arthur, the humble son of their nurse."

"Augustus!" shrieked she, "the noble heir of a noble father!—the son of Villeroy! My heart is unerring. Arthur it was who died; and you, by the black arts of the wretches round you, filled his station, whilst your death was announced instead of his. Come to my heart—to my arms—they are open to receive you, and proclaim you to the world, the twin heir of Villeroy."

She rushed to his embraces. They were clasped in each other's arms, whilst rapture, astonishment, and joy, sealed up every language but what their reciprocal feelings conveyed to the souls of both. Many minutes elapsed in the silent transports of delight which occupied every breast, and pourtrayed every countenance. Lady Fitzwalter raised her head; the image of her brother again met her view, and again and again she folded the precious resemblance to her throbbing bosom; when a person,

who

who had stood near the door, beholding the scene, with evident marks of strong agitation on his face, drew near. It was the generous stranger—the gallant defender of Arthur.

"Does Lady Fitzwalter remember me?" he emphatically enquired.

She looked—considered him attentively some time—looked again, and started.

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed she—"Guilford, if I mistake not!"

"The same," he replied, as dropping on one knee, he pressed her hand respectfully to his lips—"The same, esteemed, revered sister of an adored master, who, after an absence of nearly twenty years, is permitted to come before you once more. And, Oh! Lady Fitzwalter, how great must that resemblance be, which, after such a lapse of time, could impress me as forcibly as it has done you, when in a distant country;

and believing this gentleman unconnected with his beloved likeness, my heart attached itself to the dear remembrance, and vowed never to quit it."

"The preserver of my life," cried Arthur, "who saved me from the assassin's deadly attempt. To him is owing that I am here."

"Oh, wonderful dispensations of Providence!" exclaimed Lady Fitzwalter, "that Guilford, the faithful servant of the father, after a complication of mysterious events, and himself so long unheard of, should come forward, in that particular quarter of the globe, to rescue the life of the son, supposed to have been many years before resigned. What shall I call you, Guilford?" added she, taking his hand—"What can I say, to express all my heart feels for you? Accept every grateful impulse of it you so nobly deserve. Here, Villeroy—here is the man, who, for years, was the faithful follower of your father; who adhered to him and his wife, through sickness, trouble, and fatigue,

fatigue, till death closed the scene of their existence; who watched, with the same zeal, over your and your sister's infancy, until the machinations of villainy found it necessary to send him from his charge, to complete the purposes his integrity must have baffled. He saved your life, and your own heart will speak the rest."

She placed the hand of Guilford, which she held, in one of Arthur's.

"It cannot speak all it feels," replied the latter; "but every eventful circumstance united, join us, eternally, in indissoluble bonds of friendship. From this moment I consider him as a parent; and, in that view, my future home is Guilford's, through life. Yet," continued he, "can I, am I to believe this astonishing revolution of my fate?—Yes, I will credit it, for my aspiring soul, which contemned the grovelling state that clogged its soaring prospects, feels it has met its kindred station; and at your

feet, Lady Fitzwalter, respected ere seen, beloved ere known, your acknowledged nephew pays the first tribute of his exaltation."

"Thou art indeed my nephew," cried she, again folding him to her heart. "There spoke the son of Villeroy—the inspiration which Heaven breathes in the soul of his protected creatures, pointed out to you your superiority of birth. Yet there is another claimant, Villeroy—a twin sister, whom you preceded but a few minutes into the world. Alas! where shall we turn to seek her! There was no female child to impose her for. She was obliged to be removed from observation, and when your death was proclaimed, her's was likewise given out, whilst the innocent, helpless infant was made the prey of an itinerant stroller. Oh, God!" continued she, "can we dare hope to find her after an interval of eighteen years? Does she yet exist, or where are we to seek her?"

"I will, through the world!" exclaimed Arthur.

Arthur. "If on earth, I'll discover her, and the twin heirs of Villeroy will together triumph over villainy."

"Yes," cried Lady Fitzwalter; "and in such a cause, the same God, who watched over you, will direct you where to look for her. She was stolen."

"Stolen!" echoed Emily.

"Yes," repeated Lady Fitzwalter—"stolen; and the theft connived at by the base woman who nursed her brother, and had afterwards the charge of both. Oh, profanation of the term!—she was watchful for their destruction; and the usurper of the childrens' rights bribed her to silence with their gold. It was not spared to accomplish its possession. The wretch who took the infant (the less guilty of all, for it was part of her profession) shared in the spoil, and the infamous assister of Fitzwalter's demoniac plans revelled in his extensive portion of it."

"Did the papers inform you who it was stole the child?" hastily asked Emily, as

Anna leaned, almost breathless, on her shoulder; and Mr. and Mrs. Grenville, with the poor trembling Mrs. Jeffries, awaited, in palpitating doubt, the answer, which would throw a new light on the late astonishing development made respecting their favourite child of mystery.

"Yes," replied Lady Fitzwalter, "she was stolen by a gipsey; and the servant of Fitzwalter, whom he pretended to discharge his services, was employed in the execution of that deed. He was prosecuting his vile embassy, when Guilford was drawn from his post, under pretence of his Lordship's wishing him to take his place for a while, till he could provide another to his liking. Oh, it was a deep-laid plot," continued she; "and these papers were the correspondence of master and man, which Heaven willed should be discovered. But, Oh! where can she be traced? The daughter of Villeroy, born to inherit a noble fortune, may be wandering round the world, practising the trade of her preceptress,

tress, canting for a miserable livelihood, or dragging on an infamous existence."

"No!" exclaimed Anna, springing forward, "she is not doing either. Heavenly and earthly guardians have protected her, for my claims can be no longer doubtful, and the twin sister of Villeroy is at your feet."

"What, both—both!" faintly uttered Lady Fitzwalter; "both my children!" as throwing an arm round each of their necks, she was many minutes insensible to every past sorrow, or present joy.

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Anna and Arthur still knelt at the feet of Lady Fitzwalter; she folded her hands above them; she raised her benignant countenance, and mild blue eyes.

"Father of Mercies," she pronounced with awful solemnity, "thou who hast, in thy all-wise and all-powerful ordinations,

unveiled the hidden transactions of dark and secret treachery; who hast restored the innocent to their rights, and exposed the guilty; bless—bless the children of *thy* divine protection: they have no earthly parent to pronounce the benediction. Do *thou,* Oh God, accept of that *my* heart bestows in their name. Preserve them from every design of their lurking enemy. Nerveless fall the arm that would crush them; or, ere it has strength to execute its evil purpose, may thy more powerful one avert the impending stroke, and return it on the wretch's head who would again aim at their happiness, or their lives. May the children of Villeroy be blest for ever; and the prayers of their aunt, wafting that blessing to the Throne of Grace, record it there eternally."

They were once more encircled in her ardent embraces.

"And oh, my Anna—my sister!" cried Arthur,

Arthur, "this eventful discovery explains the intuitive sentiments of our hearts. In the chamber wherein we drew our first breath together, Heaven ratified the union we formed; in that chamber the son of Villeroy sealed the packet which contained the mystery of his and his sister's birth."

"Yes," replied Anna; "and Heaven also smiled on it. Oh! my brother!—the spirit of our parents witnessed our meeting. A gleam of celestial light diffused itself round us, to imply it was no common affection that bound us to each other."

"Shall I also confess what I then believed a weakness?" cried Arthur—"But it was a divine impression this moment assures me. Yes, my Anna, when clasping you to my heart, I vowed to you the affections of a brother, the apartment appeared as illumined with the sun's dazzling rays, and the intuitive feelings of nature presented to my sight what the secret inspirations of my soul pourtrayed as a reality. I hold you to it, my sister; and all

its attributes expand with a brother's tenderness."

> " O nature born! from whom proceed,
> Each forceful thought, each prompted deed—
> If but from thee I hope to feel,
> On all my heart imprint thy seal."
> ....

The humble peasant, who had believed himself born to a state which all his rising hopes of future aggrandizement could not alter, felt, in this astonishing discovery, the secret spring that had directed all his actions. His innate sentiments turned as faithfully to their proper station, as the mariner's pointed director; and, like it, " while pointing, trembled to." For those aspiring impulses faltered in their pursuit, when the meanness of their owner's extraction rose to damp their ardour, and repel the proud wishes the intuitive monitor unceasingly persisted to form. After this discovery all concealment was at an end, and Lady Fitzwalter was informed of the late transactions

transactions respecting Anna, on which account the parties so deeply implicated in the detail her Ladyship had given, were coming from Eure Castle; and when, in the proof of the business so materially connected with it, every dark and hidden mystery would be brought to light. In the present astonishing disclosure, therefore, they observed a profound silence, till the injured orphans, appearing together, should confront their enemies, and a public avowal of their birth put them into indisputable possession of their long sequestered rights.

Anna's heart no longer beat, apprehensively, for the ignominious origin, whose open acknowledgment she dreaded so much, as a separation between her and De Courcy. The scale had turned on her side. Her birth was equal to his; her fortune far superior; for the long minority of the children, the interest of the large principal, and the withholding of every shilling left for their use, during the time, had amounted

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it to nearly double the original; which, added to the bequest of Mr. Jeffries, would make her one of the richest heiresses in the kingdom; and it was conjectured that the real and personal properties of Lord Fitzwalter would be deeply involved to liquidate the debt—if, notwithstanding his original great fortune, they were, even in the whole, found adequate to it. With what joy did Anna find herself in a situation to recompence the generous and disinterested attachment of De Courcy! In doing so, she found the sole charm of her wealth; and, in the discovery of her birth, the augmentation of her happiness arose from her affinity to her beloved Lady Fitzwalter. Her dear brother, too, had now no obstacle to impede his. The noble proof given by Emily, of her affection, when he was believed in a situation so infinitely beneath her, was a conviction that his late aggrandizement had no claim for her good opinion; and his having it in his power to reward her generous candour, and convince

vince her, that, in every situation, she was the dear object to whom he turned for domestic felicity, was not the least pleasure he experienced in his unexpected exaltation. The impending contract was now the only obstacle to the lovers' general happiness, which Emily apprized De Courcy of, and the terms of its agreement. He was somewhat surprised, but not in the least disturbed by the information.

"Keep your own counsel," replied he, smiling at Emily, "and this formidable adjustment for our union, will return to your father's hands, without his being a loser; for he shall have his fortune, and get rid of his saucy daughter at the same time. But don't let mortification break your heart, if I publicly refuse making you my wife."

"Nay," cried Emily, "don't flatter yourself that I shall pine to death at your rejection of me, whatever I may do—" and she gave a weighty sigh, "at losing the chance of a coronet: It is a pretty appendage to a woman's

a woman's consequence, and it matters very little who the bestower is, provided 'my Lady,' sounds on her delighted ear. I have a good mind to put Villeroy up to purchasing a peerage. They say, 'a new coronet is as big again as an old one;' but, from its recent creation, I should have very little precedence: and if my vanity was gratified one way, it would be woefully mortified at seeing all the Right Honourable antiques take the lead of me in the drawing-room."

"Then, in that case," replied De Courcy, "you had best be satisfied with the Lower House, which privileges you to pass the motion, I am going to make, for your own emancipation."

"Does it pass *nem. con.*" said she. "I am satisfied to remain a commoner."

"There is no doubt of it," he replied; "for my decision will determine the business. But, least any opposition should be observable on your side, be particular not to betray any partiality for my friend. My father

father will be soon here, and though I do not think he is prejudiced in favour of money, yet so large a stake might be very well deserving his attention. Preserve your uniformity to me, and the important day presents to Lord de Courcy a richer daughter-in-law, and establishes your wishes, by removing your father's *incumbrances*."

"I could kiss you for that," cried she, laughing, "did I not believe you meant me as one of them; and you may think it a blessing to escape me, for, after such a wicked inuendo, were I to be your wife, I'd prove myself the greatest incumbrance *you* ever had."

"I have a good mind to try," replied De Courcy, in the same strain, "were it only to bend your termagant spirit."

"Do if you dare!" cried Emily, "and see how far your philosophy will defend you against its attacks."

"Poor Villeroy!" said he. "What must he expect, who is determined on venturing

ing his future happiness with so inexhaustible a temper."

"It is just such another as my *own*," she replied; "and if ever we should have a matrimonial tiff, (which, like *sauce piquant*, gives an agreeable contrast to the sweets) it will begin and end *as* all fashionable disputes do—fire a shot or two at each other, and then shake hands by mutual consent."

Lord de Courcy arrived at Deventon a day or two after his son, who had dispatched a messenger to his Lordship at Oakly Park, to announce his arrival on such a day in London; and his father had appointed to meet him where he then was. All the parent shone in his eyes, as he embraced his beloved son, and beheld him in the fullness of his hopes and wishes—the refined scholar, and the polished gentleman. His care had not been thrown away, and the future heir of his house promised to be its brightest ornament. But when the

the elegant Arthur came before his Lordship, to return his boundless acknowledgments for his noble protection, and was presented to him by the name of Villeroy, Lord de Courcy caught him in his arms—

"I know it," cried he; "I could have sworn it; for your likeness to my friend, your father, was an incontestible proof of your being his son. But the woman, who passed for your mother, was the sole object of my suspicions, and I waited to meet Lord Fitzwalter, for the purpose of apprising him of them. He did not appear, and I had no just grounds to proceed on, till your return afforded me an opportunity of explaining them. You remember," continued his Lordship, "I objected to Arthur's coming to Deventon; I cautioned the party with me, at Eure Castle, against mentioning him here. I did so, because, at that crisis, I would not have had him appear before Lady Fitzwalter, as, without any certainty for my doubts, he would have only

only opened afresh the wounds of her afflicted bosom, by his resemblance to her brother. And now that the advantages of two years had improved the natural brilliant qualities of his understanding, I wished him to come in her presence; when, had not this most wonderful, I may say, most infernal discovery, been made, I was determined on a strict investigation of that woman's conduct; for, that Fitzwalter was the villain, I never once harboured a thought of."

This explanation of Lord de Courcy's private sentiments was another proof of Arthur's claims, had not the papers so fully asserted them; but those papers were not to be produced, for since the memorable day of Lady Fitzwalter's examination of them, she had never seen or known what had become of them. But it was very evident that his Lordship had taken care they should never again appear to confront him.

This

This business of the twin heirs filled each bosom with so important a concern for them, that every other was suspended, in the anxious expectation of its decision; and on the immediate one of Anna, the parties were in hourly waiting for a summons to attend the courts. Even the equally anxious contract was set aside by the desirous parents, until the lawful claimants of Villeroy were publicly established in their rights.

The fair unknown, at the Lodge, could not be so near a resident of Deventon without its coming to the knowledge of De Courcy, who, the instant he heard of her, expressed an eager desire for seeing her. Learning she was a foreigner, and of such uncommon beauty, the form of the lost Lady Agnes attached itself to the description; and however remote the probability of expecting to meet with her, under the protection of Lady Fitzwalter, the possibility of its being no other person

son was capable of credibility; and to get a sight of her was his earnest wish. Yet he had sufficient prudence to keep his doubts to himself, from the idea that if it really should be the daughter of his friends, and wished to keep her rank concealed, his betraying any curiosity would give a suspicion of the truth, from the story of Lady Agnes being already known amongst the assembly at Deventon. He believed, however, he might find means to satisfy himself, without acquainting any person belonging to it; and if it were her, there was only him and Arthur could tell who she was. He, therefore, made sure of the first opportunity that offered of the ladies being all out visiting, and walked over to the Lodge, where, slipping a guinea into the servant's hand, he asked him to be admitted to a sight of the lady there. The man pocketed the bribe, and pointing to the parlour-door, which stood half open, gave a tacit information of her being there. De Courcy looked through it. A female was sitting

at

at one of the windows, her head resting on one hand, as the other applied a handkerchief to dry up her fast falling tears, pressing it at intervals to her bosom. Some of her beautiful black tresses had escaped their slight confinement, and descended nearly to the floor. De Courcy gazed, with admiration, at her fine figure, and expressive attitudes, but was not yet ascertained; he was not, however, long left in doubt. She raised her head at a slight motion he made to open the door wider, and the object of his scrutiny presented itself in the once haughty, but now humbled, Lady Agnes di Ludovisa. He entered—her eyes met his—she started—her complexion varied.

"De Courcy!—is it not?" she exclaimed. "Oh! was I not already sufficiently mortified, but that *you* should appear, to humble me still more!—to add fresh tortures to my distracted bosom! Yes, De Courcy, you may look with wonder. It is no longer the

the haughty, arrogant Italian beauty, you behold, but the lost, undone, wretched Agnes. Oh, God!—hide me from myself —from the world—from De Courcy."

She threw herself on the seat from which she had risen at his entrance, and burst into a more violent agony of tears.

De Courcy was not so surprised at the sight of her, as he would have been, if his suspicions had not led him to this enquiry; but he was most heartily concerned at finding her in a situation so unbecoming what she was entitled to. He approached, and, with more respect than he ever shewed the imperious beauty, when in the zenith of her power, addressed himself to her.

"I have not yet recovered from my astonishment at meeting you thus unexpectedly, my dear Lady Agnes," said he. "To meet you *here*, after so long an estrangement from your family, and your friends,

is indeed a happiness I had not hoped for, but in which I most sincerely rejoice. Consider me as your friend, for such I profess myself, with truth, and tell me what it is has occasioned you to place yourself under the roof of Lady Fitzwalter. Oh! dearest Lady Agnes, confide in me. You are not happy—I perceive you are not. Where is Villars—your husband? Does he require the assistance of a friend? Tell me, and I will fly to offer mine, for your sake."

She endeavoured to take her hand from him, as wishing to escape his presence, but he held her fast.

"Why, Lady Agnes, would you avoid me?" he continued. "Fear not that I shall betray you, if you are here unknown. Let me try and restore peace to your bosom. Allow me to be a mediator between you and your beloved parents. Ah! with what joy will they receive intelligence of their long-lost child!"

Lady Agnes started, wildly, from her seat, exclaiming—

"Never!—never will they forgive me! —Never will they receive any intelligence sent of me! I have forfeited a father and a mother's blessing eternally, for a vile, unprincipled wretch, and their execration pursues my disobedience! I have no husband! I am a wretched, lost, undone creature! De Courcy, you have roused the injuries in my bosom, which that angel of peace, Lady Fitzwalter, had sought to sooth? My brain is on fire!—I am mad, De Courcy! Oh, God! that I were laid in my peaceful tomb; or that I had never been born to stab the happiness of my parents, by the disgrace I have brought on them and myself."

De Courcy was horror-struck: He had not power to interrupt the frenzy of her actions or her words, but gazed, doubtful, whether the unhappy Lady Agnes was not raging in all the fury of settled madness.

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Her violence, however, subsided; she grew calmer, and again addressed herself to him.

"You see before you, De Courcy, the miserable victim of her own vanity and credulity. The fatal beauty, nature so lavishly bestowed on me, was my bane; and to exhibit it in this country, over all your boasted countrywomen, I listened to the artful deceiver. Yet let me not wholly accuse him. I do not seek to extenuate my own errors. Had I not attended to him, I had not been betrayed. I deceived my parents—he deceived me."

A shower of tears here came to her relief, in which De Courcy permitted her the free indulgence, until growing more calm by them, he again tenderly solicited her confidence, and besought of her to impart to him the whole truth.

"At present," said she, "De Courcy, I cannot; I would be unequal to the task.

Indeed there are circumstances which almost forbid me doing so at all. Do I survive the event of a few weeks, it is my determination to dedicate the remainder of my days to penitence and prayer, within the walls of a convent; and, by my humble contrition to Heaven, perhaps I may seal my peace with my parents, ere I quit this world. Before I go from hence, you shall be informed of all you wish; and," added she, raising her fine eyes, with fervent devotion, and joining her beautiful white hands—" if it is the Almighty's will to call me from a wretched existence, in giving birth to my miserable offspring, I will leave behind me my melancholy story for your perusal. One request I have to make of you, De Courcy—I am here unknown, nor would I have your friends acquainted with who I really am for worlds; keep it therefore a secret, and, should we ever meet together in their presence, look on me as a stranger."

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De Courcy faithfully promised secresy, but mentioned his friend, Arthur, being also at Deventon, to whom she was alike known. Lady Agnes seemed, at first, rather confused at learning he was so near, but she quickly recovered from it, and requested of De Courcy to apprise him of it also, least he should see her, and, unguardedly, betray her name. He left the unfortunate Agnes more composed than he had met her, and she promised him to exert herself towards preserving it.

De Courcy's thoughts were so various and so complex, that he could scarcely credit its being the once admired and haughty Agnes di Ludovisa he had seen and spoken to—now humbled, disgraced, and unassuming, obliged to the charity of a stranger for a roof to shelter her wretched head under—the daughter of one of the first nobles in Italy, whose rank, beauty, and fortune, would, but for her pride, have rendered her alliance not unworthy of a

prince—reduced, by her own imprudence, to a situation degrading even to one of her own servants. That Villars was a villain, his conduct from the beginning gave proofs; but that he could have abandoned a woman, of whose former station in life he was so well aware, was, to De Courcy, an inexplicable mystery. He might have deceived her with respect to himself, and, perhaps, insulted credulity, and wounded vanity, might have actuated her to quit him; but, if that was the case, however she was an object of compassion, it rendered her conduct still more reprehensible; for be his situation what it might, she had hazarded every certainty for its chance, and should abide by the choice she had made. He was, however, resolved on losing no time to exert his interest in her behalf; it might not be too late to rescue her from the fatality of her indiscretion; besides, he had given a solemn promise to the Marechese and his lady, if ever he heard of their unhappy daughter, that he would

would instantly announce it to them. He did not despair but a pathetic representation of her contrition and repentance, would operate on her father's heart; and her mother's, he was convinced, was open to forgive and receive the penitent child. It might, perhaps, reconcile her to them and her husband; and this alloy of their happiness would, in a general reunion, prove the fortunate means of establishing it more firmly than before, by teaching Lady Agnes a lesson of humility.

With this laudable design, De Courcy lost not a moment in writing off to Naples. He mentioned his having discovered her, without particularizing where, or in what situation - painted her despair and distraction at having disobliged her parents, which affected both her mind and body, under the dreadful idea of having their execration—and he conjured them, as they valued her eternal peace, to send her their blessing and forgiveness. He spoke not a

word of Villars, as judging that his silence on that head would be solely attributed to motives of delicacy, nor mentioned any expression for their admitting her to their presence again, as believing it wiser to proceed on progressive grounds for their full favour; but said, that on receiving their answer, he would have the honour of addressing them further. This letter he dispatched, without loss of time, keeping his proceedings concealed from Lady Agnes, dreading that any disappointment to his hopes might counteract all his expectations, and sink the wretched daughter into incurable despair.

A few days after this conversation, Lady Agnes became the mother of a lovely little girl, whose infantine smiles, while they drew tears from her weeping eyes, appeared to sooth the agonies of her bosom, as she pressed the dear baby to it. This event, so much dreaded by her, and her kind friends at Deventon, promised to be attended with happier

happier consequences to her health and peace. The ladies watched her with assiduous care, and never left the Lodge without one or other of them in it, to stay by her; and this generous attention, together with her own to the little nursling, diverted the poignancy of her afflictions, and Lady Agnes rose from her temporary confinement more lovely than ever.

The expected summons from the courts at length arrived in official form, and every person concerned in the business pending there, directed to appear the next following day but one; and the paper also stated, that a person under sentence of death, in the jail of Exeter, had been found out to know something of the important transaction, for whose evidence a reprieve had been obtained, which was the occasion of delaying the affair so long.

CHAP. V.

Curse on the villain! O deceitful wretch!
Couldst thou consent to wrong such innocence!

DARCY.

THE expected morning, which was to proclaim the Heirs of Villeroy, and stamp the character of the guilty Fitzwalter, arrived; and Anna met it with serenity. She was now supported by her brother, by her respected aunt, and by numerous additional friends; and of the justice of her cause, she had not a doubt. She, with Lady Fitzwalter, Mrs. Jeffries, Guilford, and Emily, set off together in a post coach,

coach, and were followed by Mr. and Mrs. Grenville, Arthur, Lord de Courcy, and his son, in another, with Mrs. Glynn and the old butler, in a chaise, bringing up the rear. The cavalcade drove into Exeter by ten o'clock: every place of it through which they passed, crowded with spectators, who thronged after them to the court, impatient to hear the result of a business which engrossed the attention and interest of all ranks. This concourse of people were not unexpected, and they did not surprise the party. But as Anna alighted from the carriage, a buz prevailed through them, with—

"That's the young lady! That's she was stolen by the gypsey! What a lovely creature! God prosper her cause!"

Anna was in the midst of them, and as she passed through the lane made for her and her company to enter, she saluted them with a thankful expressive motion of

her head. The party entered the court-house, and all of the populace that could find room crowded after them.

Arthur, with his friend De Courcy, withdrew to the jury-room, as they thought it advisable for him not to appear yet, least his presence should confound the principal witnesses; but as his name must be brought forth in the evidence, when it was necessary for his coming forward, he should be called.

The judge was seated as they came in. Lady Fitzwalter entered first, leaning on the arm of Anna. His Lordship, for it was one of the chief judges sat to try the cause, bowed to the party, and the clerk of the courts led them to their appropriate seats. But her Ladyship had scarcely been sat down, when there advanced to her a neat respectable-looking old man, his hair as white as snow, and the mild placidity of his honest face more touching from the genuine emotions

emotions of joy, which exhibited itself in large drops trickling from his aged eyes, and exclaiming—

"My lady—my beloved lady! your poor old Robert sees you once more before he dies; and he thanks God for the unexpected blessing!—My lady—my dear respected lady!"

The faithful creature made an effort at kneeling to kiss her hand; but she prevented him, and extended both her's, whilst this affecting address from respectable old age called forth the tear of sympathy from her Ladyship—

"My good, my worthy old man," she cried, "you are not happier to see me, than I am at beholding my faithful servant; and, ah! my revered old friend, on what a sad business do we meet!"

The

The aged servant shook his blanched locks.

" A dreadful business, my dear lady!" he replied.—" A dreadful business to wrong the orphans!—And my poor Lord too; I am sadly grieved that he should so far forget himself.—But it will all end well, I hope, my beloved Lady; and my Lord will not be found so much to blame as the people think.—God forbid he should! my poor old heart would be terribly afflicted, if any person of the name of Fitzwalter was found to disgrace it!"

" Oh, my good Robert," she answered, with a deep sigh, " your hopes are vain: your Lord has disgraced it for ever! When this business is over, I will have a long conversation with you; and I promise you, my worthy old man, if it is your wish, you shall not part from me again."

"Oh, bless you, my honoured Lady," cried he; " I have no wish, on this side the grave, but to be near you."

He

He was retiring as he caught the looks of Anna and Emily, sitting at each side of Lady Fitzwalter: they smiled at him, and both most kindly shook his hand. Lord de Courcy also advanced forward to greet this venerable character; and the attention of the whole assembly was, for for some time, directed to this impressive display of kindness and gratitude.

The respected faithful servant took his station near his old companion, Margarette; and, beside her, sat the nurse. The countenance of the former exhibited terror, and she dared not lift her eyes to Lady Fitzwalter. That of the latter was pale, wan, and dejected: her hat shaded it very much; but it was observable that she wept plentifully.

The important cause opened with the re-examination of the woman who had been before questioned, and her evidence was exactly the same it has been stated, when the judge asked her—

"Did

"Did she think she would know the person of whom she received the bribe for stealing the child?"

She said—

"She could not tell, it was so many years ago; but if he was not very much changed, she believed she might recollect him."

His Lordship made a motion of his head to the clerk in waiting, and immediately there came forward a poor, emaciated-looking man, who was obliged to lean against the table for support.

"Do you know that man?" asked his Lordship.

The woman looked at him very stedfastly for some time.

"Has sure has my name be Poll Wilkins,

hit be Mr. Nugent," said she; "and that's the very man gi' me the twenty guineas."

Lady Fitzwalter fixed her eyes on him. He knew her directly; but it was not until after he had spoken, that she perfectly recollected him. The woman was withdrawn, and Nugent desired to take her place; but the wretched man was so weak, he was unable to remain long on his feet, and the judge ordered him a chair. After some leading questions being put to him, in which he acknowledged the transaction, his Lordship ordered him to detail the particulars, and not conceal the name of any party concerned in them. The man bowed, and commenced as he was desired.

"To state the facts according to my oath," he began, "I must accuse myself of many heavy charges; but it is necessary I should do so, in order to prove how I was led in to be so deep an accomplice of this guilty affair.—It is four or five and twenty

twenty years since I went to live as *valet de chambre* to my Lord Fitzwalter. I was fond of dress and good company, which I indulged in more and more, till my expences exceeded my wages, and I made free with my Lord's money. This continued for a long time; he missed it frequently, but I was never suspected. When in the country, I had not so much occasion to continue my practices; but after his Lordship's marriage, and that he came to town with my Lady, when she was so grieved at quitting the two children, I began my old customs, and went on until I was at last detected by my Lord himself, in the act of opening his bureau drawer, with a false key. I had nothing to plead in my favour: I fell on my knees to him for mercy.

'Villain,' he cried, 'I have it in my power to hang you, and I will do so!'

'Oh, my Lord,' said I, 'have compassion on me! I confess my guilt, and throw myself on your mercy!'

"He

"He walked up and down the room for some time: at last he came up to me where I was still kneeling.

'Nugent,' said he, 'you have deceived me, and I fear to shew you any favour. Can you be faithful, if I pardon you?'

'If I am not, my Lord,' I replied, 'you have it always in your power to punish me.'

'Swear it then,' cried his Lordship, handing me a prayer-book.—'Swear to be true in whatever I shall ask of you, and I promise as solemnly not to touch your life.'

"I took the oath required, and happy to get off so easily, determined to keep it, whatever it was; for I had no idea of what my Lord intended.

'And now,' said his Lordship to me, 'you may remain in your service as usual, until I settle further on the business I want to employ you in.'

"Some time after this," continued Nugent, "there were preparations making for

for the family quitting town, and I understood they were going to Mrs. Grenville's, at Deventon. My Lord called me into his study.

'Now, Nugent,' said he, 'I am going to put you to the test.—Do you remember your oath, and the conditions of it?'

'I do, my Lord,' I replied, 'and will keep it faithfully.'

'Then,' answered his Lordship, 'not only will I abide by my promise, but you shall never want for money as long as I live.'

"He studied awhile as he took a few turns up and down the room, and indeed as if considering what to do.

'Well,' cried he, 'I will depend on you.'

"He looked stedfastly at me.

'Nugent,' continued his Lordship, 'the twin children of my brother-in-law are between me and a noble fortune.'

'I know they are, my Lord,' I answered.

'They

'They must be out of the way, good Nugent,' added he.

'Out of the way, my Lord!' I repeated.—'How?'

'Pshaw!' cried his Lordship. 'Are you a fool and a rogue both? Don't you understand me?'—and he pointed down with his finger to the ground.

"I could not be deceived in what he meant," said Nugent, going on. "But as great a rogue as I had been, I never turned my thoughts to commit murder; and, as Heaven shall judge me, the answer I made him was—

'My Lord, if the childrens' lives are to be sacrificed for mine, better they should live than me. I'll have no hand in their deaths; but in any other way that I can serve you, command me; I'll obey.'

"His Lordship looked terrible angry.

'Who asked you to take their lives?' said he. 'Let them be dead to the world, and I in possession of their money, and I care

I care not if they live themselves to the age of old *Parr.*'

'And how is that to be done, my Lord?' I asked.

'We must contrive it,' he replied. 'If there was only one brat, it would not be so difficult a business; but, confound it, there's a pair of the hateful brood, and we have double trouble: and there are so many watches over them, besides,' added his Lordship. 'One of them I have planed to get away—that rascal, Guilford; for which purpose I make a shew of discharging you, Nugent: and though he is become an independent gentleman through his cursed honesty, I'll come round him so, that, with all his cunning, he shall be my slave. The moment he quits Eure Castle, you must set off there, and with my orders to Robert for discharging every servant in it, but himself and the old woman: I'd send them a packing too, but they are old followers of the family, and it might give cause for suspicion. The old

old building may tumble about their ears if it will, and the damned craving set of paupers round it must provide for themselves in future; my money shall not go to support them, now her Ladyship is out of the way.'

'But she may return to it, my Lord,' I said.

'Never,' replied he. 'I'll take care she never shall; for rather than she should, I'd level every stone of the Castle with the ground. The fewer eyes that are there, the less observation. Yet, Nugent,' continued my Lord, smiling, 'I have a notion of getting it put in repair.'

'What! the Castle, my Lord?' said I, quite surprised.

'Yes,' he answered; 'and for that intent will give Mr. Guilford an agreeable journey; as he's fond of travelling, he shall be indulged in seeing more of the world: *he* shall not be a Marplot, I promise you. Don't you see what I'm at, Nugent? Under pretence of repairing the

the old fabric, that, curse me, if I care was sunk in its own river, with all its present inhabitants in it, I shall send him off to Italy to purchase ornaments, which I will take care to countermand when I have him secure there. In the mean while, you will be at the Castle, setting all our engines to work. But, Nugent,' went on his Lordship, 'as there are a couple of go-betweens to dispose of, we cannot attempt any thing without winning over that old lynx, Mother Margarette, and her careful daughter. Damn it! if we took the children, they'd raise the country on the kidnappers, and my Lord and his man would cut a pretty figure in history."

"So then," said the judge, interrupting Nugent, "the great and (what he ought to have been, had he followed the example of his predecessors) noble Fitzwalter, put himself on a footing with his servant. Remember you are upon your oath to declare the truth."

"I am,

"I am, my Lord," replied he—"upon the oath of a dying man, for my life is forfeited to the injured laws of my country; therefore I shall neither extenuate my own guilt, or add to any other person's, but declare the truth, and nothing but the truth."

"Continue," said the judge.

He bowed to his Lordship, and went on.

"My Lord informed me that Guilford was to meet him at Deventon.

'And when we leave London,' said he, 'you are to set off to the Castle, try how far you think Margarette and the nurse can be won over to our side, and let me know it; but don't proceed too far, if you find their suspicion wakened; leave it to me to manage them: only do you set your wits to work on their best foundation, and I will do the same, and which ever is judged the best, that we will go on.'

"I quitted Lord Fitzwalter's service," continued Nugent: "he and his Lady set out for Mrs. Grenville's, and I went off to the Castle. I delivered my Lord's written orders for the discharge of all the household, except those already stated, which was done immediately; and I began my attacks on old Margarette. I would sometimes praise the childrens' beauty, then add what a pity it was they had ever been born to come between my Lord and the great fortune; at other times wish they were dead, or that their father had gone before he ever thought of marrying; sometimes say it would be a blessing if they were out of the way, to give my Lord Fitzwalter their large property, for that such children would not be missed in the world, and he could do a great deal of good with it, before they were of an age even to receive it, if ever they did arrive to the possession of it; and there were a hundred chances to one if they did, as children had so many hazards to run in their infancy.

"But

" But I found Margarette too faithful to be tampered with. She would abuse me for a vile inhuman savage, to wish the pretty creatures' deaths, or even to think of such a thing, and declare she would let my Lord himself know what a shocking unprincipled wretch I was to covet the dear childrens' fortune for him, who did not want it, if ever I said any thing more about it. I found it would be a useless task for me to attempt corrupting the good dame," continued Nugent, " and I resolved to write to his Lordship, that he might try himself what he could do with her. Several letters passed between my Lord and me during the business, the copies of which I kept in my room at the Castle, for fear he should ever break his promise with me, that I should have these to produce against him; and it was long after I quitted it, that I went to search my trunk, and not finding them, recollected that I had left them behind me there, and it was too late then to go look for them:

but if I had them now they would be convincing proofs against him and me."

These were the eventful papers which had elucidated the infamous business to Lady Fitzwalter, and she immediately said—

"They have been in my hands: I have read them. I suppose you know who I am?"

"Yes, Madam," replied Nugent, "I do. You are Lady Fitzwalter. — And your Ladyship saw these letters? Thus Heaven is just in all its directions, and decreed that I should leave them behind for that purpose!"

The judge discovered in this man something above the common class, and was truly concerned to find he had made so bad a use of the gifts he possessed. Nugent proceeded—

"A gang of gypsies about this time took

took up their abode in the woods round the Castle, and the thought struck me of having one of the children stolen by them. I knew it was a common practice of theirs, and that they were expert at the trade; but I did not wish it to be known to them all, for fear of any disturbance being made, and that some might discover for sake of a reward. I therefore selected a smart-looking wench from the tribe, who used to come often down to the Castle, and wheedled myself into her good graces, by making presents."

The woman was not standing far distant from him: she advanced two or three steps.

"Hand making love too, Mr. Nugent," said she: "you knows you did, so don't deny hit. You was sweeter hon me than hever Joe Wilkins, my husband, was; hand hif you was not, you had never got me to consent for hall your gold hand kick-

shaws, 'acause why, I left hall my hown kind to do your bidding."

The judge frowned, the assembly smiled, the woman retreated, and Nugent went on.

" We were assisted in our designs just at that time, as if some evil spirit was befriending us. The small-pox broke out in the neighbouring villages, and made terrible havoc amongst the children. I was in hopes the twins would catch it, yet was not a little surprised to see that no precaution was taken to avoid it; but I soon understood the reason. The officious Guilford, before he was sent for by my Lord, hearing the disorder spoken of about the place, as becoming very prevalent, believed, that, in such an apprehended danger, the children would run less risk from the inoculation, than the natural infection; and before the disorder had taken a head in the neighbourhood, he had

had them both cut for it, by the country apothecary, and, when he came off, left them in a fair way of doing well. But there was still every thing in our favour, if the two women could be brought to consent. My Lord came down in a great hurry to the Castle, but kept it rather private, and just as he did, the nurse's boy, Arthur, caught the infection, and was given over in it. His Lordship played his part with Margarette and the nurse. I believe, however, he had not an easy task; but he prevailed in the end. The nurse's son died, and the male heir of Mr. Villeroy was put in his late living situation, and his death reported instead of Arthur's. No person could tell to the contrary of its being really so; for she had been removed from the Castle down to the Wood-house, by my Lord's orders, as it would have been impossible to put the business into execution under the eye of old Robert, and the Wood-house was safe from intruders, by the strange stories that went

about of all the places round it; and, besides, the people belonging to my Lady's neat hamlet were forbidden, by his Lordship's commands, all further recourse to the Castle; and having lost their good patroness, found themselves obliged to do something else for their future maintenance, and gradually deserted their former habitations. In the meanwhile, I had succeeded in my plan of making away with the little girl, and the moment she was safely off, her death was supposed also to take place, and the twins reported to have died in a dreadful state, from the natural and inoculation pox both breaking out together. A shell was provided large enough to contain two bodies, in which was placed that of the deceased boy; and Arthur's remains were deposited in the family vault, by the fictitious names of Augustus and Marianne Villeroy."

"This is the most unexampled piece of villainy," cried the judge, "that ever came before a public or private examination: yet

yet *you*," to Nugent, " are less guilty than your employer. You have, in its extenuation, the saving of your life. He has nothing to plead. You probably preserved those innocent childrens' existence, which Lord Fitzwalter would most assuredly have aimed at, had he found you ready to admit his inuendo," and he pointed down with his fingers, as Nugent had described his Lord's similar motion. " But this astonishing and infamous cause, degrading to honour, humanity and justice, brings to light two equal claimants—a twin brother and sister ; one of them appears to contest her rights, but where are we to apply for the other ? These two connivers of their Lord's wickedness," to Margarette and the nurse, " are, I conceive, our ostensible mark, particularly the woman who nourished him at her bosom, and who could afterwards have the conscience to sacrifice him to a villain's, and, I suppose, her own interest."

" Oh, do not condemn me so severely,"

said she, sobbing out her words. "I was led to believe that the children would be restored to their rights at a proper age, or I never would have agreed to the proposal made me."

"And how could you give credit to the words of a man," cried the judge, "who was capable of fabricating so deep a plot? Should not the deception of their death and interment have convinced you that Lord Fitzwalter never intended they should be brought to life again?"

"I had no conversation with his Lordship on the business," she replied. "He employed a surer person to win me over."

"And who was that person?" asked the judge.

She made him no answer, but continued to weep.

"It was me," cried out Margarette; "I confess it, though she would not condemn her mother. But my Lord got round me

me so *dextrically*, that had it been your Lordship's own self was in my place, you could not have refused him. I'm sure I was as fond of the two babies as the two eyes in my head; but when he told me such a story of the *jeffery* he was in about money matters, why I thought it no sin for the children to lie bye a few years, when they would be again *confiscated* in their own fortune."

"You were right there, my old woman," replied his Lordship: "they were both confiscated together most assuredly; but, if I mistake not, my Lord will have tit-for-tat returned with interest: and I think we may as well hear in this place how the *honourable* Peer came *round* you."

Margarette came forward, and, on account of her age, was permitted to use the chair set for Nugent. Before she began, the judge was privately informed, by Lord de Courcy, that she was not always very correct in her words, which, from the few

she had already delivered, his Lordship was tolerably aware of, and however serious the business, prepared to smile at them, as well as to witness those of the Court. The old dame was desired to commence at the time of Lord Fitzwalter's coming to the Castle to meet his designing partner.

" Please your respectful Worship," began Margarette, addressing herself to the udge, " when my Lord came there that time, I never was so much surprised in all my born days afore, for I no more *inspected* his Lordship there then, than the man in the moon; for the sarvants *was* all turned off, and the Castle quite in a *scumfish*. So, to be sure, I could not tell what had brought him, but I sets about making the place as *titeish* as I could, and I thought that the room Mr. Nugent had was the best aired for my Lord: so I gets some of the fine furniture into it—and there's plenty of grand *combusticles* there, all

all going to *dislocation*—and crams all the papers I found into an old cabinet, and puts all the rest of the *trumpetry* into the great lumber room, and made up the apartments near the other in the same manner for his Lordship's use; but when he saw me busy about it, he says—

'Don't put yourself to any *disconvenience*, my good Margarette; I shall take up with any place for the short time I stay.'

"So, to be sure, I thought my Lord had got very pleaseable since he was there before, when he would not sleep in a bed that had not velvet *hangers* about it, and all the rest of the furniture quite equal with it."

"We may suppose what Lord Fitzwalter's bedchamber was," said the judge, "without the trouble of your describing it. Proceed, if you please, to the direct business we want to learn."

"Well, please your Honour," continued Margarette, "I was sitting the next day in

in one of the rooms of the west tower I think; for there is four of 'em, but they are all going to *rumination* now but one, tho' if they was taken care of they might do well enough yet.—You never see the Castle, I suppose, your Worship? It's a fine noble place, built like a *fortrifidation*."

"You'll keep us all day, woman," cried his Lordship, in an angry tone, "describing your nonsense. I tell you I want to know nothing but the actual story."

"Well, well, your Honour," replied the talkative Margarette, who, notwithstanding her situation, had no inclination to curtail her discourse, "don't be in a passion; I'll tell it as quick as I can.—So my Lord comes into the room where I was at work, and I remember very well I was mending the chitterling of one of Robert's shirts, and his Lordship shuts the door after him, and down he sits beside me. Well, for certain I was in a terrible *complication*, when he takes hold of my hand, and says he—

'What's

'What's the matter with you, my good Margarette? You look quite frightened.'

'Oh my Lord,' says I, 'I am alone here, and at a great distance from the rest of the people below, and sure you're not going to be rude to me.'

"So with that he laughs up in my face.

'Do you think I would attempt being rude to you, my dear Margery?' says he. —'Not for the world: I have too great a regard for you.—But don't you recollect when I was a boy, and you the "bonnie lassie," many a time I kissed you; and indeed I think you should go by that name still, Margarette, for you are neither old or ugly yet—ugly you'll never be,' said he, 'and I hope you'll live to be very old.'

"To be sure, your Worship," she continued, "I was seventeen or eighteen years younger than I am now, and you may think I was something worth looking at."

And she lifted her poor old shaking head,

head, with such an air of consummate vanity, that a general burst of laughter attended her words and gesture, which for some time discomposed the gravity of the assembly. The ancient Venus was not, however, disconcerted by it; she waited, with a sort of approving smile on her furrowed face, until it had recovered its former serenity, when she resumed her story.

'Margarette,' said my Lord to me, 'I want your assistance in a business, which if you do not give me, I am an undone man, for all that I am a Lord, and have the name of a rich one. My family have been always very kind to you, and it is in your power to shew how grateful you can be for it to me.'

'And to be sure I am, please your Lordship,' I answered, 'very graceless for what they have done, and I hope to prove it by doing any thing you may ask of me upon honest terms; for I have always *demeaned* myself very properfully, and would not go

go to do other ways, now that I am come to years of discretion.'

"So I thought my Lord did not look too well pleased at first; but he was silent a few minutes, and then he says again—

'I don't want to make any improperous request of you, Margarette, as to your own pretty self: but the truth is, I am in a dreadful——'

"He said some curious word, like preditement, I believe it was—

'For a great deal of ready money, and if I don't get it, my honour is lost, and my estates go to pot.'

'Laws! your Lordship,' says I, 'cut down the great trees hereabouts, and I warrants you'll have plenty of money in no time.'

"Hem!" cried the judge, "you were come to years of discretion in that advice, however. Well, and what did his Lordship answer to it?"

'You fool,' says he, continued Margarette,

rette, ' I dare not cut down a branch of it to sell.'

' And has not your Lordship the childrens' money in your hands,' I said to him, ' until they are one-and-twenty, and can't you take as much as you want of it to disparage yourself now, and you can very well settle it in all that time?'

" I don't know whether you were a knave or a fool," said the judge, again interrupting her, " but you were devilish shrewd in your instructions. Go on."

" Well, your Worship," resumed she, " his Lordship went on a great deal about his honour, and a jail, and I don't know what myself, till I'm sure he made me cry, out and out.

' Oh, if these children *was* dead,' says he, ' what a happiness it would be for me! for I dare not for my life touch a shilling of their property while they are forthcoming!'

' God forbid the pretty dears was dead!' I answered,

I answered, not thinking it any harm; but my Lord got into such a rage, and he shook me by the shoulder so, that I was just all in *jometry*, and he cried out—

'Do you wish them little *insignificous* brats better than the son of a family that gave genteel bread to you, and your father and mother before you?'

"And that was very true, your Honour," she cried, again digressing from the main point, "for my father was porter to the Lodge many a long day, both in the old Lord's time, and the one that was before him; and my mother lived in the Castle a great many years, until she had so many children, that they gave her a nice cottage near it (but it is down a long while ago); and when I came to be a slip of a girl, I was taken by the family to live with 'em; and so you see, your Worship, I was obligated to serve my Lord.

'Well, Margarette,' said he, 'if we could contrive to keep the children out of

of the way for some years, so that the world would think they were dead, I might do what I pleased with their money, and they would not be any losers in the end. What do you say, my pretty Margery? Don't you think it would be a good plan?'

"To be sure I thought it a very *comicalous* one," she continued, "and did not well know what to make of it; but his Lordship told me such a long story about his keeping the children under his own care, and seeing them properly brought up, till at a *futerous* time he would surprise the people by bringing them to life again, that I began to think there would not be much harm in consenting to it, as he so terribly frighted me about his going to a prison; but I did not like to have the children taken away without knowing something of where they was going, and what about them. Oh dear, what a bitter rage he got into! Did I think, he said, he

was

was going to murder them, or do what was not right with them? was not he their uncle, and would I dare suspect him?

'Oh dear, no, my Lord!' says I, all over *trimbulating*. 'I'm sure I don't. But I would like to have one of the little things near me, and I am very sure that Mary won't give her good-will to have them both taken from her.'

'You will try that, my good Margarette,' says he; 'and if she does not, you must see what can be done. But mind how you go about the business, and before you say a word of it, make her swear never to tell it to any human being, while living or dying, without my leave; and you must also swear the same thing before you go out of this room.'

"I'm sure," added she, going on in her story, "I would have taken fifty oaths to be true to him; for I never thought that I'd be brought before so many *witlesses* to *exclose* them: no more wouldn't I, if I had not been made to do it, and dragged such

such a long journey too, that all my bones are shaked to a *jummy*, and the flesh on 'em bruised so, that I can *imparison* it to nothing but the *venimous* pasties the cook used to make for my Lord's table. I'm sure many and many a one I see come to the sarvants' hall, and I would not taste a bit of 'em, for all they was done up in such a nice jelly; but, your Worship, they always looked to me like a piece of a dead——"

"Never mind the venison pasty," cried the judge. "Don't begin a dissertation on eatables, woman. I wonder you are not tired of the story, not to bring in so many unconnected digressions. Make an end of it as quick as you can, or you will keep the court waiting on you all the day. Come, you mentioned the affair to your daughter."

"Yes, your Honour," continued Margarette, "and it was just when her own boy got very bad; and she was in such a *consecration* at what I told her about my Lord's

Lord's *bezelems*, that she could not speak a word for a great while: and then she cried so about the children, and said she never could give them up to be so wronged; for so she insisted it was wronging them, to pretend they was dead, and take their money. But after arguſying the business over and over with her, and talking of all my Lord's goodness to us, and what more he'd do, and that the children would be righted again, she at last promised to consent, if the boy was left with her; but that she never would, unless that: and, in that case, she would take care of him as she would her own, till the time mentioned, and pass him off for some other nurse child. So I tells this to his Lordship, and he was in a terrible taking what to do about it; but he askses me did I think my grandson would die of the small-pox? and, to be sure, I said it was quite unpossible for him to recover, as he was *mortally* bad indeed. So with that he bids us give out that the twins

was

was taken with the *inspection*, and to keep them close at home.

'If Arthur goes off,' says my Lord, 'it will be all right; I'll settle the rest of the business, you may tell Mary, and she shall have the child.'

"So I told her, and we did his bidding; the poor little things being kept to the house, excepting when Mr. Nugent went there to say they might go a bit into the wood, and he would watch about.—But, my Lord, I remember reading in a pretty story book, something concerning a wolf and a lamb. I am not very clear about it, tho', but as your Worship is so larn'd, mayhap you know it all yourself: so the lamb was stolen by the wolf, and I thought my daughter would have gone beside herself when she missed the little girl, till Nugent told her that she was taken by Lord Fitzwalter's orders to a very safe place. She could not help it then, but she cryed the matter of two days after her, tho' she believed it was all very true; and indeed

so

so did I, until this business came across us, to tell how *decevous* he had been.—And then, your Worship has heard all about the boy, so I needs not make a longer story of the matter: she brought him up as her own son Arthur, and nobody never know'd to the *contribous* of it."

"And that son," cried the judge, "she must produce, or be answerable for the consequences."

Lord de Courcy withdrew, and returned instantly leading him in.

"Behold him here," exclaimed his Lordship. "I took him from her two years ago. I now produce him to maintain his own rights — the twin heir of Augustus Villeroy, bearing the same name of his father, and his image stampt on every character of his countenance and person."

The nurse gave a violent shriek, crying out—

" It is—it is him, indeed !" and fainted.

She was taken for recovery into the air. The eyes of the whole multitude fixed on the majestic Arthur, and a shout of applause greeted him. He bowed gracefully round, when the judge taking his hand, seated him by his side.

" Of the iniquity of this business," said his Lordship, " there is proof undeniable. This is the son of the late Mr. Villeroy, positively and publicly acknowledged, without any shadow of doubt remaining. But with respect to the lady whose cause we met on, and through which this other claimant has been fully avowed, there are yet some circumstances wanting to establish her equal rights. That the daughter was stolen at the time stated, and by the woman present, is certain; but can we declare this lady to have been that self-same infant? Can we take the oath of a vile unprincipled creature, that she did not

not exchange the child, and impose another in her place?—No, we cannot. It is not an incontrovertible demonstration. We must have proofs undeniable, and how are we to obtain them? The change from infancy to womanhood, renders a personal investigation ineffectual. Here is a necklace, which that woman gave in for a testimony, as having got it round the child's neck."

Lady Fitzwalter requested it to be shewn. It was presented to her.

"I know it," said she. "My own hands placed this and a similar one on the neck of each child, as I understood there was some virtue in amber for the cutting of infants teeth."

"Yet, Madam," replied the judge, "your recognizing it does not prove this young lady to have been the original owner. It is certain the necklace belonged to your niece; but we must have

facts to prove the present claimant to be her, before we can pronounce judgment in her favour."

Guilford, who seemed selected by Heaven, as the defender of his beloved master's children, stood up.

"If she is the daughter of Mr. Villeroy," said he, "I will prove her. The woman who has just been carried out, can, I dare say, do the same, and it is incontrovertible."

"State your evidence," replied the judge, "before she returns."

Guilford ran over the situation he held with the late Mr. Villeroy, and whatever was necessary to support his evidence, in which he was often interrupted by Lady Fitzwalter's enthusiastic expressions of his faithfulness, echoed by Arthur on his bravery and generosity, who, in the ardor of his gratitude, communicated the business

business at Naples to the attentive and delighted auditors, till the Court resounded again with acclamations, both for the speaker and his deliverer; and the worthy Guilford was so confused, it was many minutes before he could recover himself to proceed.

"When I was in France with my master and mistress," said he, "one festival eve she expressed a wish to visit the chapels. Mr. Villeroy was too much indisposed to bear the heat, and would have persuaded her against going also; but she was so anxious to view places she had heard so much spoken of, with respect to magnificence at those times, that he would not object strongly to it, and I had the honour of attending Mrs. Villeroy to them. Heaven I believe guided her wish, for I trust it will be found, at this distance of time, the grounds for establishing her daughter's claims. We reached the gallery of one of them; but the crowd got so great, and the heat so oppressive, my

mistress could not bear it, and she requested I would endeavour to lead her out. It was with much difficulty I made my way to the stairs, as she held by my arm; and there the concourse pressing forward, rendered it almost impossible for us to descend. There was an additional bustle also; a lady had dropped a little *Agnes Dei*, or silver cross, going up, and as we got down a few steps, we observed her above us, in great anxiety about it. It was picked up below by a gentleman, who not being able to reach the loser, very unguardedly threw it up, and as Mrs. Villeroy stood directly between them, it struck her on the breast. She put up her hand instantly, and caught at it there, when she gave it to the owner; and her daughter was born with the indelible mark at her heart, the impression of a very small cross."

"This," cried the judge, "will be indeed an undeniable proof, if found on this young lady."

"It is so," said Anna, hastily. "I bear the

the resemblance of a cross directly here," and she laid her right hand towards the place mentioned.

The nurse came back more composed, when he asked her, did the infant that was stolen from her bear any particular marks whereby she could be known to her again? and the woman replied to it, that she could know her any where, by the figure of a cross, just near her heart.

"Then," said the judge, "the young lady's own assertion convinces me she bears that ostensible proof; but to establish her claims fully to the world, she will retire with Lady Fitzwalter, Mrs. Jeffries, and you," to the nurse, "and the report of the three, on oath, will decide this eventful cause."

Anna withdrew, accompanied by those persons, who, at their return, swore to the exact figure of the cross being as described,

cribed, when his Lordship, taking her hand, placed her also beside him. If the assembly was vehement before in their acclamations, how infinitely more so were the people at finding the person for whom they were so anxiously interested, clearly and indubitably ascertained in her birth claims! The hats were thrown up, huzzas followed each other, and every individual appeared to partake in the happy conclusion of this extraordinary affair. Lady Fitzwalter had been overcome with joy, but that the execrations which attended her Lord's name, counteracted its effects; and the tears of transport were accompanied by those of poignant regret, at the conviction of their being so deservedly bestowed. The gipsey woman, the nurse, and Margarette, shared in the indignation of the populace; but for the unhappy Nugent, they seemed to feel compassion instead of resentment; they would not add to the wretchedness of his fate, and he had, besides, some plea in his favour.

They

They considered that he had been instrumental in saving the childrens' lives; and with that, together with his being led into the guilty transaction for the preservation of his own, presented him to them an object of mercy. The name of Guilford was again reverberated in accents of praise, in which they joined that of the respectable old steward of the Castle. Mrs. Jeffries was applauded to the skies for her protection of the orphan, and her worthy departed husband blessed in his grave. Every person who deserved approbation received it amply: every one who merited contempt was not spared.

"And, Oh!" cried Lady Fitzwalter, "where are we to place confidence, since those we most depend on often most deceive? For you, Margarette, there is no extenuation of your fault: you committed a breach of the most sacred trust, and have forfeited my favour for ever. I own to you, that were I mistress of Eure Castle,

you should be no longer an inhabitant of it; but I have no command there, and can only tell you what I would do, if I had."

"Oh, my Lady, I know I have been very graceful and wicked indeed!" she answered, sobbing out her words; "but what could I do? My Lord unposed on me so about his *barasses* and his *troubleness*, that I believed every word he said was true as the Bible; and I remember reading a pretty story in it, all about a young woman, and two old men. Lord have mercy upon us! you see, my Lady, that the holy good people there could be temptified to wickedness so well as us poor *unmortals*. And then to be sure, my Lady, what I have suffered in that great ghostlyfied Castle, with all the spirits and *hobgobnels*, that many a time I wished myself far away; and then too, I have seen poor dead Mr. Villeroy twenty and twenty times there about the woods: then every night I lay down in my bed, Mrs. Villeroy

was

was by the side of it, and she'd shake the curtains so, and look so terribly cross at me, that I'd be all over *hagified*, just you know, my Lady, like a body when their blood *staggerates*; so that I'm sure God knows but I have paid well for my sins and *inquisitories!*"

"It was his divine will," replied Lady Fitzwalter, "that your own conscience should haunt you with the resemblance of the persons whose offspring you so deeply injured. The Almighty is just in all his dispensations, and the stings of your accusing mind gave reality to imagination.—And you, Mary, how severe should be your remorse, who could sacrifice the children you were placed over as a mother—the infant boy you gave milk to! Heaven forgive you, and enable me also to do the same! for I will not be hypocrite enough to say, that I do it now. You have lost my favour for ever, and for your future support, you must still look to your unhappy employer; tho' he

may not be found so ready to give it, now that all secresy is at an end."

"Then," cried Lord de Courcy, "I am bound to protect her. I promised, if she resigned Arthur to my care, that, should my assistance be wanted to her, she should have it. I had anticipated some material discovery of him, that would most probably implicate her. It has turned out so, though not in the manner I expected it. She has a demand on my favour, and my promise is my bond. I will be her friend, wherever she wants one."

Lady Fitzwalter gave an approving look to his Lordship. She was glad he had interfered, for, consistent with her own feelings, her Ladyship could not give protection to a person who had so cruelly assisted to destroy her peace; yet she would be concerned to think of her being reduced to want, for she could not suppose that Lord Fitzwalter would any longer befriend her, and even despicable as she particularly

particularly appeared to Lady Fitzwalter, she would have prevented every actual distress, by bestowing her relief through another channel than herself; for to assist this woman openly, she could not do, and Lord de Courcy's proposition was not disagreeable to her Ladyship. Yet the nurse had another friend present, in the person she had most injured—Arthur, who, forgetting the injustice of his nurse, in the kindness she had shewn him as a mother, was determined to take her under his own protection, when, in possession of his rights, he would have the liberty of so doing. This poor unfortunate woman, the dupe of deep-designing artifice, could not yet believe that Lord Fitzwalter was so execrable a contriver, although fully convinced of having acted wrong herself.

"Oh, my Lady!" she cried, as weeping plentifully she shewed how sincerely she was affected, "it wants another year of the time my Lord appointed to restore the dear

dear children; and how do we know that he would not have been true to his word?"

"Never," said Nugent, coming forward—"never would his Lordship have kept that promise: he never intended it; for when he gained his ends, he was in hopes Margarette would be dead before the period of twenty-one years; and if *you* lived, he would find means to silence you by——"

"In hopes I would be dead!" cried the old woman, with quickness—"He was a bad man: I see it now—a very bad, wicked man! I that helped him over all his *inficulties*, and, but for me, would have been in a pretty *dilemity*—To suppose I would be dead in twenty-one years! I wish I had but know'd his thoughts then, he never should have made me his dupe, or his *jacobite*, I promise his Lordship!"

Margarette was in a terrible rage at the idea of her death being desired by her vile

vile instigator, and muttered away to herself all the abuse she could think of, as believing the dissimulation which touched at her own precious existence, more heinous in its guilt, than all the rest put together.

It was not till silence had been several times ordered, that she could prevail with herself to hold her tongue, when the judge seeing Nugent wished to speak again, desired him to communicate what more he had got to say.

"It is only to prove that Lord Fitzwalter never had a thought of re-instating the children," replied he, "by mentioning a few later occurrences, which I think requisite to be explained. The little girl he believed to be effectually removed, therefore was perfectly at ease respecting her; and it was his Lordship's intention to take the boy away from his pretended mother before the period al-

ready stated, under pretence of performing his promise, but in reality to banish him where he never could be heard of, and, by some means or other, silence all apprehension of his ever coming to light. It is not more than a year and a half back that my Lord heard, by accident, of a party having been a few months before down at Eure Castle, spending some time, and the dread which attends self-condemnation alarmed him, with the fear of any discovery being made, through a visit, which, in order to guard against such a thing, his Lordship had suffered the Castle and its environs to go to ruin. I believe I should have mentioned before that he had become so professed a gamester, that three-fourths of his time was spent in pursuit of it, and his own fortune and the childrens' tolerably deep amongst the rogues and sharpers of the metropolis. I was acquainted with all his affairs, and had a constant resource in his purse for my own. To find out whether Lady Fitz-

walter

walter had made one of this party, and to set his mind at ease respecting it, he told me he would pay a visit to her Ladyship, whom he had not seen for a long while, and whose relationship to the objects of his hatred was the occasion of his dislike to her, and the fear of her penetration, another cause for his Lordship so openly abandoning her. But he had not been absent many hours from London, when I received a note to meet him immediately there, at our general place of appointment. I flew off directly, and found his Lordship in a state nearly bordering on distraction.

'Nugent,' he cried, 'we are lost, ruined, discovered! Lady Fitzwalter knows all that has happened!'

"I stood like a confounded criminal as I was, without the power of replying.

'You may well look horror-struck,' added he; 'for you are as deep in the damned business as I am. That cursed visit to the Castle has blown us both, and I wish

I wish the proposers of it had been blown to the devil before the curious set ever reached it! Why did not I blast it there myself, and all belonging to it, within and without, by a barrel of gunpowder at its foundation! Damn my foolish head, that did not! There would have been no after-claps following the grand explosion.'

'I can be only implicated as an accomplice, my Lord,' said I, when I could speak; 'but your fortune is ruined as well as your character.'

'Not so fast, Nugent, if you please,' answered he: 'there is something in our favour yet. It will go devilish hard with me, or I'll keep the money snug for all that. No person knows it but Lady Fitzwalter, and her I have secured against further communication of the affair, until her nephew comes before her. She is so confoundedly nice in her honourable principles, that she would rather break her neck, than break her oath, and I think the chance is, she breaks her heart first. I have

have given her Ladyship a pill to digest, which, if she does, she's of tougher materials than I thought her; and, in the mean time, I am going post to the Castle for Arthur.'

'For Arthur, my Lord!' I cried, with amazement.—'What to do with him?'

'Not to bring him to her Ladyship, I promise you,' replied he; 'but transport him somewhere he'll never he heard of, during her short life at least.'

"To be brief, your Lordship," continued Nugent to the judge, "when my Lord Fitzwalter went to the Castle, and learned that Arthur was gone away with Lord de Courcy's son to travel, he was like a madman, and without deliberating on the subject, came off again to London, informed me of this unlooked-for business, found out the route the young gentlemen had gone, and, without telling me further than that he intended to follow them, gave me a small sum of money for my own use until he returned, as he would

would be, he said, but a short time away; and charging me to take up my station in the neighbourhood of Exeter or Deventon, to watch what was going forward about the latter place, he quitted town privately, in pursuit of his destined object. Weeks and months passed over without my ever hearing a single word from him. My money was gone, and I had no place to apply for more. I waited with impatience, till an unhappy occurrence came in my way, and my evil genius guided me to seize on it: It was that for which I am doomed to pay the forfeiture of my life. I one day observed a gentleman, at the post-office in this town, receive a quantity of bank notes, in a letter, which he unguardedly opened there to public view; at the same time I overheard him say, to a person with him, he was going off in the evening by himself on horseback, and hoped no danger would arrive to him on the road, with all that money about him. I watched, and robbed him;

him; but being myself well mounted, I got safe to London, where I changed some of the notes directly, and in a very few days after this unfortunate transaction, I was surprised by the arrival of my Lord. My first enquiry was for Arthur.

'He is safe,' answered his Lordship. 'I have nothing to fear from him in future; and if you tell me Lady Fitzwalter is dead, I am the happiest man in existence.'

'She is not, my Lord,' I said; 'though her life was a long time doubtful, it has been for some time out of danger."

"Gracious Heaven!" thought Arthur, as Nugent repeated the words of Lord Fitzwalter, "could his Lordship have been the contriver of that desperate attack made on me at Naples?—Too surely he was; and had it succeeded, I should (to use his own terms) have been *safe* indeed."

Nugent continued.

"Lord Fitzwalter was, for some time after

after he returned, entirely engrossed by a business very remote from this we are on, but in which I again assisted him. Heaven pardon me that transaction! it weighs deeper on my soul than every other," and the unhappy man appeared very much agitated.—" But," resumed he, after a pause of some time, " it is not necessary to mention it: it bears no reference to the present——But why—why did I not submit my life to the first offence, before I was compelled to add guilt to guilt, by the promise I made to save it? Shortly after the period I allude to," he went on, " in passing the rest of the notes, I was apprehended, when my own conscience turned my accuser, and I confessed the fact. I was brought to the county it was committed in for trial, and I have received the judgment of my offence. Yet if my evidence now has proved of use to the wronged orphans, I have some mitigation in my wretched lot; and if my repentance is received by my Eternal Judge, it is most sincere!"

Here

Here the unfortunate man concluded, and scarcely able to keep his seat, from the violence of his agitation, he was an object of universal compassion; even those he most helped to injure, were most forward to lend their assistance; and the judge, with the utmost humanity, ordered some persons belonging to the court, to convey him to a certain part of the jail, where he would be more comfortably placed, than in the miserable one he had occupied since his condemnation; and a sum of money was handed over to him from the principals, for the purpose of administering immediate relief to his exhausted state.

Lord de Courcy was observed to speak a few minutes to the judge, but their conversation was held in so low a key, it was not possible to comprehend its substance. His Lordship, however, appeared very anxious on the subject he spoke of, and the judge seemed to agree in whatever it was.

Every

Every fact being fully elucidated in this important cause, and the claims of the orphans indubitably established, the exemplary president of the bench stood up to pronounce the final decision. Arthur and Anna rose likewise, when, taking a hand of each, he declared them as Augustus and Marianne Villeroy, the lawful children and twin heirs of their late namesakes and father and mother. Lord Fitzwalter was cited, and three times proclaimed by the crier of the court, to come forward in the space of twenty-one days, from that time, to answer for his misdemeanors, otherwise his estates, real and personal, would be publicly disposed of, to the reimbursement of the childrens' property, principal and interest, from the time of their concealment to the present; which decree was also set forth in all the public prints of the day, and the affair announced in them likewise, with every animadversion and stricture that such an unexampled proceeding merited.

On

On the party's quitting the court, Villeroy led out his respected aunt and beloved sister, through innumerable accumulated crowds, every one pressing forward to behold the recovered heirs, and shouting in exultation at their success. Lady Fitzwalter's coach was made way for, in which he handed her, Anna, and Mrs. Jeffries; himself waiting the coming up of Guilford, whom he would have to return with them. But this praise-worthy man was intercepted by the populace, who, closing round him, insisted on drawing him to Deventon in a kind of triumphal car, against which he very strongly remonstrated; and it was only through the interference of her Ladyship and her nephew, that they could be prevailed on to resign their intention; but when those five interesting persons had ascended the carriage, the horses were taken from it, and, amidst reiterated acclamations, they were conducted to Mr. Grenville's, by the multitude, who surrounded, and assisted in drawing the vehicle

there. It was a fortunate circumstance, that, in the enthusiasm of their applause, they totally forgot an object against whom the mob had determined to level their indignation: this was the gipsey woman, who had most probably paid dear for her share in the infamous transaction, if their thoughts had not been engrossed by the first persons who came forward; and, in the mean time, the judge getting some intimation of their intention, took her under his protection, till the clamour of the people had followed the other party, when he gave her, from himself, a few guineas, together with a small sum sent her by Lord de Courcy, and had her safely conveyed from the town. Margarette, the nurse, and the good old Robert, were suffered to proceed to Deventon unmolested; yet had it not been their respect for Lady Fitzwalter, and the protection of the venerable steward of the Castle, it is possible the mob had expressed their resentment on the two women, from which even the age of the antiquated

antiquated dame had not preserved them. He took up his residence at Mr. Grenville's, with his dear honoured Lady, and his two companions were permitted to become inmates of Mrs. Jeffries's, until they returned to the place they had come from. The crowd that attended the respective parties were regaled by them, with whatever refreshments the three houses could afford on so hasty a call; but they had strong beer in plenty given them, in which they cheered the health of the givers, by repeated bumpers, and withdrew to their different homes, no less pleased with the attention shewn, than the cause which had attracted their zeal.

The moment Lord de Courcy arrived at Deventon, he gave orders for his chaise and four to be got ready immediately to take him off to London, which sudden resolution was not a little surprising to his friends there, who pressed him to remain until morning, whatever was his business;

but he said it was one of a momentous nature, and admitted of no delay, for which reason he would travel all night, and he hoped to be with them the following one. This communication puzzled them yet more, to divine what it could be; but their astonishment was lost in admiration and reverence of this great and laudable character, when at his Lordship's return, late the following night, or indeed early the morning but one after, he demanded admittance also for another, though not so consequential a guest, in the person of Nugent! for whom the noble, the beneficent Lord de Courcy had, before he slept or refreshed himself, beyond what slight repose he found on the road inns, obtained a full pardon; when posting off directly with the royal mandate, he proceeded to Exeter jail, and never relaxed in his humane pursuit, till the person for whom he exerted it was liberated, and delivered over to him.—It was on that subject that his Lordship had privately spoken to the judge,

judge, when learning that the execution of Nugent was postponed *ad libitum*, till the cause should be decided, he had applied for its further prolongation, but could only obtain a short time; he therefore had none to spare, and thought not of personal fatigue to save the life of a fellow-creature. The joy of the unhappy culprit had nearly proved as fatal to him, as his expected ignominious death, although Lord de Courcy announced his pardon with caution to him. It prolonged his life, however, but a few months, for he was far gone in a decline; and during that time he was so sincere and contrite a penitent, that, notwithstanding the enormity of his offences, another of which was known before he died (that one he had himself alluded to in court), his kind friend found him deserving of his care; and every assistance or attention that could tend to prolong existence, was bestowed on him. He was placed, by Lord de Courcy, in comfortable lodgings, in the vicinity of

Deventon, as he was found too weak to be removed to London, and there he received the full forgiveness of Lady Fitzwalter and the orphan twins, who sought, by every little kindness, to convince him of it, in the amplest extent, frequently visiting and administering to his drooping frame some delicate restoratives, but never reverting to past subjects, or encouraging him to do so either. He suffered a great deal in his last hours, which he bore with patience, and expired pronouncing blessings on them, and all his invaluable friends.

The public summons of Lord Fitzwalter was unattended to, in consequence of which, at the expiration of the stated term, his Lordship's property was lawfully investigated, and his estates put up to sale, for the payment of the children. They were found very much involved, and barely adequate to the debt, without touching at Lady Fitzwalter's settlement, which was out of the reach of law, although, had it been

been necessary, she would have freely resigned it, having her brother's bequest of three thousand a-year at her own disposal. Villeroy made it a request that Eure Castle should be purchased out of the property for him, which was so done, and he became its master; but there being a year wanted to end his minority, he gave orders, during that period, to have it put in thorough repair, both within and without, and superbly decorated; the overseeing of which his worthy friend Guilford undertook, and the stewardship still remained with the good old Robert. Margarette and Mary Jenkins he allowed to occupy their former stations, and go down with them to it; and determined, when he came of age, to follow the steps of its worthy predecessors, and make it the principal seat of his residence: it was a favourite place of his beloved Emily's, no less than his dear sister's, and had been such to Lady Fitzwalter, until her peace was so cruelly destroyed. Villeroy yet hoped that

the obstacle so wonderfully removed, might induce her to become a resident of it again; but he forbore mentioning his expectations till he was the uncontrouled master of the Castle, and that this revered spot of his juvenile days had been restored, as competent as possible, to its pristine magnificence, with the favourite hamlet of his respected aunt established on all its former benevolent systems.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Thus far it was in human power to go, and thus far he has gone; but here his course is closed, and his genius cries out—all is consummated.

ROBBERS.

THE business of the long formed contract was now the next grand subject to be taken into consideration, and a day was fixed for the opening of some important affair, which the younger part of the united families gave no intimation of being acquainted with, but seeming to think it of very great concern, from the formality that attended its appointment. Anna awaited the business at present with per-

fect serenity, since, mistress of a noble fortune, that which would be forfeited was not to be placed in competition with it; and, as the niece of Lady Fitzwalter, she believed, that in his heart, Lord de Courcy would be as fully pleased with her alliance; and her brother's union with Emily would cement the family tie nearly as great as her marriage with his son could do. Villeroy could have no apprehensions on the business; he was certain of Emily's affections; he was sure of her steadiness, and of his friend, De Courcy's, he had not a doubt: yet, even though the terms of the contract should be insisted on by his Lordship, the new found heir would support his claims to the daughter, by extricating the embarrassments of her father; nor would it be any injury to his princely fortune, especially as Emily being the only child, the reversion of the redeemed property would again devolve to him by the course of nature, at the death of Mr. Grenville. But in the astonishing revolutions

which

which had lately occurred, the affair which had so much engrossed the mind of both parents, was considerably weakened in its ascendancy, particularly with Lord de Courcy, who thought he observed something of the truth in the animated expression of Villeroy's manner to Emily; and, however guarded his son and Anna were, the friendship they openly professed seemed of the tenderest kind, and his Lordship knew that "friendship with women was twin sister to love." But whatever his opinion might have formerly been, it did not now advance any secret argument to oppose his son's wishes, if they directed to the daughter of Villeroy; and he believed the exhibition of the contract would be only to ensure to Mr. Grenville a free and disencumbered estate, which Lord de Courcy did not feel disinclined to, since it was the mutual agreement of both that would give him the lawful possession of it.

The morning appointed, every individual

of the united circle met in the drawing-room, where, at a table, sat Mr. and Mrs. Grenville, with Lord de Courcy, looking over papers and parchment. De Courcy, by chance, had taken his seat near Emily, and, finding himself there, played off a few tender attentions, which again wavered the opinion of his Lordship, and kept the junior number of the company in constant smiles, at the dexterity of his invention to mislead the rest into a momentary supposition of the accomplishment of their wishes.

Lord de Courcy opened the business by a long explanation of its origin and tendency, expatiating on the friendship subsisting between both families, and the happiness looked forward to in the union of their two children, whose amiable qualities gave every hope of judging would be permanent and solid. His Lordship then took up the contract, which was waxed in three places, and sealed with the De Courcy

and

and Grenville arms, and opening it, commenced reading, as Emily and his son, with tolerable dissimulation, seemed to learn it for the first time.

"Henry and Emily," said Lord de Courcy, when he had finished reading, "it has long been our hopes to see you both united in the most endearing of all ties, and the moment is arrived which will, I trust, realize them. To make you happy, is the ultimate of your parents' wishes; it is the leading one of this agreement; and the attachment you have evinced for each other, in your progressive years, will, I hope, warrant the sanction your parents give it, whilst I, for them and myself, thus join you for ever."

He held a hand of each, and was in the act of uniting them. Emily's heart throbbed higher than usual, but she suffered his Lordship to keep her's, without shrinking, as De Courcy immediately withdrew his, and said, with firmness—

"Hold,

"Hold, my Lord! — this information comes too late. I love Emily Grenville sincerely, and I respect her father and mother; but the affections which, in an agreement of this nature, should be her's only, are not mine to bestow—they belong, with my hand, to another, and truth and honour obliges me to say, I must decline the alliance proposed for us."

"Are you married, De Courcy?" cried his Lordship.

"No, Sir," he replied; "though, perhaps, if I had been aware of any violent obstacle to prevent it hereafter, I might have urged my eloquence to render it abortive. But, with your approbation, it will not be a considerable time before I present to you, as a daughter, the beloved choice of your son, in the heiress of Villeroy."

Mr. Grenville could not be dissatisfied, since, by De Courcy's refusal, he beheld himself a richer man than he had ever been; yet he experienced some uneasiness on Emily's

Emily's account, lest this rejection of her hand should affect her feelings, either as an insult to female vanity, or a disappointment to her heart. He looked in her face, but he could not perceive a trait of either sentiment displayed there: It was playfully pleased and animated—if it was the index of her mind, he had nothing to regret—for the loss of a reversionary title was of as little consideration to him as it was to his daughter, with whom he knew external consequence was but of trifling estimation.

De Courcy took the hand of the deeply blushing Anna.

"Here my choice is fixed for life," said he; "it was made before she was acknowledged as the niece of Lady Fitzwalter; and had she been even still unknown as such, no other woman should have received my name but her."

"Then," cried Lord de Courcy, "I receive,

ceive, as my future daughter, the object of your selection – she does honour to it; and thus join your hands, as I hope an early day from this will give to you a wife, and make me father to the niece of a lady who possesses every respectful sentiment of my heart. I trust her approbation will sanction the act, and that the son of her brother's friend may be found worthy of obtaining his daughter."

"He is!" exclaimed her Ladyship. "De Courcy is deserving of her, and I ratify the act with every blessing my heart can bestow. It realizes the hopes I once formed, but which I afterwards thought visionary; for, by this union, the son of Villeroy is at liberty to solicit the dear object destined for De Courcy — Emily Grenville."

"Is it indeed so?" cried Lord de Courcy.

"Yes," replied Villeroy; "and permitted so to do by the parents of my Emily, the day which puts me in possession

session of my rights, shall give to her the name of Villeroy."

"Oh, you fool!" said she laughingly; "to burthen yourself with two such worldly concerns at once, as money and a wife. The only chance you have in your favour, is the one proving the antidote to the other. She may dissipate your fortune, and her own health, so rid you of both incumbrances by the time you get tired of one of them."

Had not so many witnesses been present, Emily would have had a retort for her saucy speech; but, as it was, Villeroy could only press her hand, to assure her, that the incumbrance she alluded to particularly would never be intolerable to him.

Lord de Courcy tore the contract and the deeds, when, shaking the hand of Mr. Grenville very cordially—

"Well,

"Well, my friend," said he, "I hope, though this business has not ended as we once wished it might, the termination of it has not been found disagreeable. On my part, I can assure you it has not—Henry has got a wife, and Emily gained a husband, equivalent to the loss of each other. They have besides pleased themselves in the most momentous concern of life, and in the singular events which have attended them, we are taught an incontrovertible truth—that in every thing there is a fate, and man's projects are frail, when the unerring hand of Providence interferes to baffle them for its wisest purposes."

"True," replied Mr. Grenville; "and if you are satisfied, Lord de Courcy, why should not I be so? With all my heart do I bestow to Villeroy my Emily, and may the union of our respective children prove the basis of theirs, and their chosen partners uninterrupted felicity."

Mr. and Mrs. Grenville blessed the beloved

loved daughter of their care, and the noble being her heart had distinguished. Villeroy had no longer any restriction on his conduct, and his affection for Emily was as open as it was ardent. She merited every grateful sentiment his expanded soul was capable of experiencing, which entwined with the tenderer regards she had established there, his love for that amiable girl made part of his existence, and every concern of it was devoted for the formation of her happiness.

The marriage of De Courcy and Anna was fixed at six weeks distance, which was to take place at Deventon, from whence they intended to set off to Oakley Park for a short time, accompanied by their respective friends. The good Dr. Barclay received from his pupil a warm invitation to attend his wedding, which the worthy divine promised, and expressed, in his answer, the most heart-felt satisfaction at the happy occurrences which had taken place to all parties.

parties. To Villeroy he sent his sincere congratulations, expatiating, in the graceful eloquence he was so capable of, on the gracious powers of an unerring Providence; yet pourtraying, with exemplary energy, the Christian attributes of charity and forgiveness, which he strongly enforced in an address to him, that the injustice he had received through Lord Fitzwalter might be silenced in the humble adherence of Heaven's divinest favour to man — the practice of that mercy man hoped to receive.

The auspicious day at length arrived, that gave to the enraptured De Courcy the hand of the elegant, gentle Anna. The company that attended the wedding were the select friends of the happy pair, and the ceremony was performed at the neighbouring church, with as much privacy as possible—the fair bride being an enemy to parade of that kind. Lady Fitzwalter never looked so mildly beautiful as on that day;

Anna

Anna shone her modest lovely counterpart; and even the laughter-loving Emily's fine countenance was meliorated with an expression of solemnity, as the awful vow was pronounced, and that she reflected how soon she was to make such another. All the worthy Mrs. Jeffries' earthly cares were at an end—she beheld the daughter of her adoption acknowledged in her birth, possessed of her rights, and united to a man of noble principles and equal rank; but, from the moment of her first receiving her, to that which made her a wife, this respectable woman never resigned the charge she had so benevolently protected. De Courcy's claims now superseded every other, and to them, Mrs. Jeffries, with tears of joy, surrendered the beloved child of her constant affection.

Doctor Barclay appeared at Deventon, according to his promise to De Courcy, and his company was warmly greeted by every person there; but no one experienced

rienced more pleasure in it than did Villeroy, whose obligations were of a nature to demand his most grateful remembrance. He did not forget the promise he had jestingly made him in Naples, which was stationed in his own mind, with a determination to keep it—either, by his interest, to obtain a dignitary, or, by his fortune, to present him with a recompence adequate to the generous Doctor's unsolicited instructions.

The health of Mrs. Jeffries not permitting her to undertake a journey to Oakley Park, it was, at the request of Anna, deferred to a later time, as she could not think of leaving her dear benefactress so soon after marriage, and at a period when her attention was wanted—and what kind attention did not that lady deserve of her! Mrs. Jeffries, however, was not ill, but the bustle of the preceding days had agitated her delicate frame; and when Mrs. de Courcy told her, she was not to go from

thence immediately, the intelligence proved the happiest composer of her enfeebled spirits. There was an inevitable decree over Anna, which she was fated to meet; for the delay of the journey occasioned her to witness a scene more severe than any she had yet encountered, and which called all her fortitude into trial to bear up against its direful effects.

The lovely *incognita*, at the Lodge, daily acquired strength of body, and the kindness of her friends imparted some of their own serenity to her mind. The union of De Courcy and Anna she heard of with pleasure, and fervently prayed for their happiness. She was visited by the bridal train, and now personally known to them all. She agreed to their repeated solicitations of adding to the agreeable society at Deventon-house, and sometimes visiting her generous friends there. The age of her sweet infant prevented her fixing any period for putting her religious plan into practice,

practice, the adjustment of which she had formed in her mind. It was through the hopes of De Courcy's interest with her father and mother, that they might be prevailed on to protect the child, whom she would convey to Naples, and there concealing herself till it could be safely given into their hands, enter the nearest convent in its vicinity, and commence her noviciate, when, she fervently trusted, that the offended parents, convinced of her devout repentance, would, in the bosom of the church, receive her again to theirs. She was resolutely fixed on taking the veil, nor did she entertain any idea of their forgiveness being attended with any dissuasive arguments to prevent her pursuing her intention.

When De Courcy understood that Agnes was coming to Deventon, he found it necessary to be communicative to Dr. Barclay, and told him who she was, and how he had acted in his information to the Mare-

chese

chese and his Lady The pious Divine was much affected at the recital, as judging the circumstances must be very aggravating, that could reduce the exalted Agnes di Ludovisa to the humiliating state represented; but what they were, De Courcy was himself ignorant of, though, in the opinion of the Doctor, appearances concurred to render the idea but too plausible.

Anna had been about a fortnight a bride, when, in a visit to the Lodge one morning, she found its beauteous inhabitant leaning over the smiling infant at her bosom, in a renewed agony of sorrow, which for some period before had not been so afflictingly observable. The innocent's face was bedewed with the tears of her mother, which, on Mrs. de Courcy's entrance, fell yet faster, as, in a pathetic voice, she besought protection for the baby, should any unforeseen misfortune attend her. Anna sought to rouze the agitated mother from

this oppression of spirits, which no fresh cause could have occasioned, and to relieve them, insisted on her coming over to Deventon for the day.

"I will not refuse your generous solicitation," answered the weeping mourner. "I would not be ungenerous to such kind alleviation as you and your friends have afforded to my wretchedness; but, ah! Mrs. de Courcy, I have a presentiment at my heart, that it will soon, very soon be terminated. Here," continued she, laying her hand impressively to her bosom—"here is the monitor that speaks it—that tells me my infant will soon be deprived of its mother. Ah! was it Heaven's will to entomb her at the same time, I would not regret the summons. Will you be a friend to her, should my apprehensions be verified?—Will you take care of her, till my parents receive the child of their offending daughter? Oh! Great God! will they ever receive,

ceive, or look on her? Have they not execrated her mother, and will they shew favour to her wretched offspring?"

The poor unhappy Agnes strained the unconscious infant with wildness to her breast; the dreadful foreboding of her mind, and the little creature's helpless, hapless state awakened every latent source of woe, and she was for some moments in a paroxysm of mad despair. Anna, who keenly, felt for the deep and secret afflictions of this lovely stranger, gently released the child from the close embraces of its parent.

"Set your heart at peace, amiable, interesting sufferer," cried she, "for the future protection of this lovely girl; and assure yourself, that should the prognostics of your mind be fatally realized, she shall not be destitute of friends. In every friend of your's, at Deventon, she will find an anxious one, who will vie with each other

to afford the endearing patronage you solicit for her. I take upon me to answer for them, but I can faithfully promise for myself."

"May Heaven reward you with its eternal mercies!" exclaimed Agnes, fervently clasping her hands. "I have none other to bestow than my prayers. I can pray for my friends, when I dare not offer them up for myself. You have relieved the agonies of my breaking heart. Oh! my friend—wherefore does it bound with the countless bodings of some direful disaster?"

Anna believed them but the effects of solitary reflection, which had presented to her retrospective thoughts scenes of past happiness; and busy memory, reverting to departed joys, compared the present with the past, and gave to the future every distracting prospect, augmenting positive affliction in the agonizing torture of doubtful hopes.

The

The infant was brought over to Deventon by a female attendant, whilst its mother pensively leaned on the arm of Anna, alternately directing her humid eyes to the smiling cherub, and sighing from the inmost recesses of her heart. The whole of the forenoon her melancholy rather encreased than lessened, and the endearing efforts of her friends were in vain administered to its alleviation. At dinner the tears were observed to steal from beneath their trembling shade, although she essayed to appear composed, and even at times forced a languid smile, whilst her heart seemed struggling to subdue the terrific sensations she weakly endeavoured to command. To relieve her oppressed mind from the extreme weight of its dejection, immediately after dinner a walk was proposed in the grounds; the child was taken also in the mother's arms, and when the dear burthen appeared to weary her drooping frame, she was relieved either by Anna or Emily, who, with Lady Fitzwalter, had

accompanied her. They strolled about some time, till Agnes growing fatigued, they advanced towards a sloping bank, near a tuft of trees, where was a sweet sequestered bench, on which, just as they had seated themselves, Villeroy advanced towards them, and, with a gay air, insisted on having a place between her and Emily. He took the little baby in his arms, and the exertions of his new office for a while diverted the mother, who could not forbear a smile at his attempts to please his youthful charge, who, as if conscious of his undertaking, chuckled and laughed up in his face; when, at that instant, a man, hitherto concealed, rushed from behind the trees, so suddenly, it was impossible to guard against his attack, and furiously grasped at the infant, to drag it from the hold of Villeroy; but the latter preserved his secure, and the alarmed mother clasped one arm round it, as with the other she held fast the arm of him who, thus doubly embarrassed by mother and child, had no power to offer any defence.

defence. The assailant drew a pistol from his pocket; as presenting it—

"Villeroy!" he exclaimed, in a voice of thunder, "you have triumphed over me once, but you shall not long enjoy it; my arm will be surer than the bravoes I trusted to—'tis I, Fitzwalter, who thus gloriously avenges himself."

He fired instantly.

"Villars!—Villars!" shrieked Agnes, as throwing herself instantaneously across the infant, her side received the leaden conveyer of death, one of which passed into it, and the other, lodging in the heart of the lovely smiling cherub, returned it an angel to Heaven. The mother fell, dragging with her the wonder, horror-struck Villeroy, and the lifeless child, both of whom she still grasped with convulsive strength. The shrieks of Anna and Emily rent the air, but the miserably fated Lady Fitzwalter remained unmoved; she neither

spoke or stirred, but with her eyes, which vaguely wandered from the inanimate objects stretched before her, to the wretched, the detestable perpetrator of this disastrous climax of his crimes. The consciousness of the infernal deed seemed to strike him, in the barbarous exultation of his supposed triumph; for, fortunately, Villeroy's fall beneath the bleeding Agnes, and murdered infant, exhibited to Fitzwalter the object of his revenge fallen by the successful aim. He drew forth a second deadly weapon.

"I am revenged!" he exclaimed; "I have had my victim!—and this terminates all!"

The ball pierced his brain—the brain which had proved his own destruction; he dropped instantly, and at the feet of the injured Agnes the soul of Fitzwalter fled its earthly tenement, to meet its grand account.

Anna leaned over the form of Villeroy, and

and the murdered martyrs; but how great was her transport at perceiving he struggled to disengage himself from their weight! The hold of Agnes relaxed at his attempt, and he rose from the ground, safe from the desperate attempts of the foe he no longer had to dread. Emily knelt by Lady Fitzwalter; she addressed her in the most endearing accents—Anna, Villeroy also. Their voice reached her ears, but not a sound passed her lips. She appeared in a state of apathy. Every feeling was hushed—every noble faculty silenced; the final blow was given her wretched heart; it was breaking, beneath the rapid succession of calamities. The family from the house had assembled to the screams of the ladies, but ah! what a sight met their view!—it would beggar description to relate it. The body of the execrable Fitzwalter was brought down to the Lodge, and the wounded one of Agnes, and the breathless infant, conveyed to Deventon House, where they were laid together on a bed, and immediate as-

sistance sent off for, together with an account of the murders, to the necessary cognizers.

It is hardly probable to suppose that the scene at Deventon could admit of any aggravated affliction — yet it did. The surgeon who examined the wound of Agnes, pronounced it mortal, and that she could not survive many hours. The ball was not to be extracted, and he apprehended an immediate mortification. The dressing of it, however, restored her to her senses; she beheld Emily and De Courcy near her. The child had been removed, and her first feeble question was, to know if it was dead

"I do not want to see it," added she, "only tell me the truth."

There was no occasion to conceal it, and she was replied to in the melancholy affirmative.

"Lay

"Lay her with me in my coffin," weakly uttered she, and joining her trembling fingers together. "Father of Mercies!—speak peace to my fleeting spirit; forgive the errors I have been guilty of. My parents' denunciation has reached me—the seducer of my weak mind has given the final termination to my miseries—I die, to expiate my crime, by the hand of him who caused it."

Not the agonies of the dying Agnes could exceed the astonishment of De Courcy at what she said, whose mind flashed with the dreadful truth of Fitzwalter and Villars being the same person; and the horror he had felt at the recent deed, was engulphed in the enormous magnitude of the perpetrator's crimes. She delivered her words with difficulty, but feeling, too surely, that her last moments were not far distant, she exerted them to address her friends, and give relief to her own lacerated heart.

"I do not repine at my death," continued the poor suffering apostate to her duty; "it was the will of Heaven I should so meet it, and I bend with patience to that Great Power I so fatally offended. Could I once more behold my parents—could I receive their blessing and forgiveness—Oh, how happy would be my release from this scene of sorrow!"

De Courcy dreaded to exhaust her too much, by encreasing her agitation, or he would have immediately informed her of his having written, many weeks before, to them, which he would yet do, did she hold out some longer time, and that her weakness, from the examination of her wound, had a little subsided. He left her to take some repose, whilst the kind, considerate Emily watched by the bed of the pale sufferer.

The equally suffering Lady Fitzwalter was also placed in bed, the victim of her guilty husband. Her patient mind, which

had nobly held up against unheard of calamitous events, sunk before that one which ended, by his own hand, the atrocious villain's career. A delirious fever followed, in which, for many weeks, she raved of the past, in madness, unconscious of the present. The base Fitzwalter was ever present to her disordered imagination, and gave every accumulated agony of horror to the distraction that overwhelmed her reason.

Fitzwalter — the infamous Fitzwalter, whose governing principles, so opposite to each other's tendency, stooped his haughty soul to treachery and dissimulation, who grasped with one hand at riches, whilst with the other, he lavished them at a gaming-table, fell the contempt and execration of the world. The enormity of his crimes had become intolerable to himself, yet, to compleat them, he aimed at the life of him he had so basely injured, and which, it must be supposed, he would have again attempted,

attempted, had he not believed his first was successful; and the fall of Villeroy with Agnes was the fortunate occasion of preserving him from the desperate intent. That presented at his own wretched existence was more successful; he was aware of the punishment which awaited its prolongation, and he boldly launched himself into another world, to avoid the fate of this, anticipating, by his own hand, the death which exemplary and merited justice would have exhibited on a scaffold. Yet, if mercy is the great attribute of God, and that it is, who shall dare dispute, even the guilty Fitzwalter must be hoped to receive it.

The fever of Agnes encreased rapidly that night; the surgeon declared she had survived longer than he had expected, but, beyond that day, she could not last. At her own desire she was informed so, when she requested that Mrs. de Courcy, her husband, Emily, and Villeroy, might attend her.

her. They did so, and she had herself raised up in the bed, supported by pillows —Oh! what a sight for the lovely daughters of vanity, could they behold the once blooming, beauteous Agnes di Ludovisa, in her twentieth year, stretched on the bed of death, the victim of her own infatuation, and boasted charms. Vanity was her foible, and to that, and a villain's insinuating, she became an early sacrifice.

The moment her friends entered the room, she addressed herself to them in a voice scarcely audible.

"I have requested your attendance, my generous friends," she began, "not to thank you for your noble care of me, which your own hearts can better describe than I express, particularly the exalted Lady Fitzwalter, who I rejoice is not present at the melancholy story I wish to relate; but do you bear to her the grateful acknowledgments of my dying heart. To De-

De Courcy and Villeroy I have long been known, but, at my request, they kept it concealed. Oh! how exquisitely poignant do I feel my misfortunes, as, with shame, I avow myself the daughter of the Marechese di Ludovisa!"

"Lady Agnes!" exclaimed both ladies. "Can it be possible? The Lady Agnes di Ludovisa, of whom we have heard so much?"

"The same," continued she; "and of whose flight from Naples, I also presume you have been informed."

They bowed an affirmative reply, and she again went on.

"Some time after those gentlemen visited at my father's, I became acquainted with one of the name of Villars; my fatal beauty attracted his attention, and he sought every means to convince me of the deep impression I had made on his heart. Although in the meridian of life, his person

was

was more than pleasing, and, to me, his manners were uncommonly engaging. Let me confess every sentiment I felt, and say that the more graceful qualities of another had more forcibly touched mine; but he slighted every advance I would have made, and roused my vanity by a superior boast of his countrywomen's unrivalled charms. It was you, Villeroy, and had I been able to awaken the passion in your breast, which for some time glowed in mine, the misery I plunged into would have been averted."

Villeroy experienced a very unpleasant sensation at this avowal; he was going to speak, but she waved her hand for silence, and again proceeded.

"My strength does not permit me to be minute in my detail—I must be concise. To exhibit my charms over the famed English beauties, and to meet there the person I then knew by the name of Arthur, in all the lustre of superior loveliness, I listened to

to the love which Villars avowed, and to the story he told of himself, which was, his being a man of considerable rank and fortune in England, who had left it through the infidelity of his wife, for which a divorce was passing between them, and the moment it did he would present me to the world as the future partner of his life. I know," continued Agnes, " that he was a man of fortune, for that my father had been assured of, and I believed him sincere in the rest, from, what I thought, his candour in telling me about his wife; yet I was well convinced that no rank, however exalted, would obtain my parents' consent for my uniting myself to a foreigner, and a Protestant. This I told Villars. He knelt, swore, entreated, and implored, that I would trust to his honour, and fly off with him to England, where he would never ask to visit me even, until, freed from his shackles, he would be at liberty to form them again with me. Duty and vanity—for it was not love that directed me, had a severe

severe struggle in my bosom, and the former would, I am convinced, have conquered; but the arch deceiver observed the conflict, and supported the latter, by dazzling my weak imagination with the adulation I should meet in his country. He was successful; I bade adieu to my parents and home forever. We contrived to elude all vigilance, by coming off in a gondola, which an Italian servant of Villars had been ordered to hire for an evening's excursion. I had been indisposed with a slight cold, and took the advantage of its confinement to make my escape; for, dismissing my woman early in the evening, I ordered her not to return till I rung. One of my room windows opened into a garden, at the bottom of which a flight of marble steps lead to a pleasure canal, on which was a little boat. I watched the hour of my father and mother being at dinner, and the servants engaged, when, concealing my face and person as cautiously as I could, I reached those steps, disengaged the little boat from its slender moorings,

moorings, and dexterously conveyed myself to the other side, where the gardens of Ludovisa extended as far as the country. There Villars waited to receive me; we set off to the bay, where, stepping into the gondola, we were rowed with expedition to where a vessel was lying for our reception, which, the moment we were on board, weighed anchor, and we steered with a fair wind down the Mediterranean, and stopped at Leghorn. Here we remained a few days, when we crossed the Gulph of Genoa into France, and from thence to England, never making any delay till we arrived in London."

The fair and unfortunate narrator was obliged to pause, having, with many breaks to her discourse, reached so far in her story. Her auditors entreated of her to defer the remainder of it until evening, as she was now so much exhausted.

"Evening!" repeated Agnes, with a faint smile

smile of expression; "by that time I think my sad story will be finally concluded."

Some cordials were administered to revive her drooping spirits, during which time Anna was obliged to leave the room, to give way to the emotions of sorrow she had endeavoured to restrain before the unhappy detailer. She returned after a short delay, when Agnes, being somewhat recovered, once more resumed her melancholy discourse.

"In London, Villars placed me in superb lodgings, with a male and female servant to attend me; he was faithful to his promise of never visiting me, but when I allowed him, and that was generally every morning. He mentioned his being very much occupied on the business of his divorce, and expressed an opinion of its being soon compleated; this, and the propriety of his behaviour, satisfied me all was right. I could not urge my own situation

tuation while his was unsettled; I waited with patience for an adjustment of the affair, when I fondly hoped all secresy would be at an end; and publicly made his wife, the delusive hopes which had regulated my late rash conduct would be realized. About a fortnight after, Villars entered my chamber one evening; every feature expressed the satisfaction of his deceitful heart.

'My Agnes!' he cried, pressing me to it; 'now indeed my own Agnes, this day has set me free, this evening shall again enchain me—and see, my love, I am determined on not being disappointed, for I have brought with me the necessary appendages of my future bondage.'

"A friend, whom I had before seen with him, of the name of *Nugent*, and a clergyman, entered—if indeed," said the betrayed Agnes, with a heavy sigh, "if indeed he was a clergyman, which I have since doubted. Villars produced a licence, and the ceremony was repeated; but whether in the forms

forms of the country or not, I am not able to determine, as being a stranger to them; but I then believed every thing he did was lawful and honourable. My two domestics witnessed the marriage, along with the other person I mentioned: and, now convinced of being his wife, if I was not happy, I was at least contented. Happy!" repeated she, raising her languid eyes—"Oh! happiness and I had parted when I lost sight of the walls of Ludovisa; it fled from me then, never—never again to bring its peaceful attendant to my sad misguided bosom."

Her head sunk on the pillow. They thought her dying, and De Courcy leaned forward to support her; it was, however, but the sensations of her wretched mind which had encreased her debility. She looked mournfully at him as he stooped over her, and an agony of tears appeared to relieve her.

"Oh!

"Oh! why was the element I trusted my life to," she cried, "less deceitful than him I entrusted my happiness to? Why did *it* not overwhelm me in its immensity, and bury beneath it my dishonour and my crime together? Were my tears to equal in magnitude the sea I crossed, could they expiate my offence to my parents? — could they expunge the dreadful sentence I know they have pronounced on my devoted head? They have execrated me— I feel they have, for it has overtaken me."

"No," cried De Courcy, "they have not. However great your offence has been, I swear to you it has not been attended by the horrid imprecation your own accusing heart would lead you to believe."

"Say you so, De Courcy!" exclaimed she, as a flush of joy passed rapidly over her wan cheek; "then do I credit you, for at this awful moment you would not deceive me. *Dio sia sanctifica* for this unhoped for mitigation to his repentant creature."

She

She bowed her head meekly, and remained some minutes in private prayer, in which no person attempted to interrupt her; and when she again lifted it, there was a placid serenity diffused over her pale countenance, and she was able once more to address her attentive auditors.

"After the marriage had taken place," resumed Agnes, "Villars made a request of me, that I would allow him to keep it secret for some time, as there might be unpleasant reflections made on him, for his so hastily entering into a second engagement, after the trouble he had to disencumber himself of the first; and that I would also consent to retire for a while into the country. I thought his observation a very just one, and readily acquiesced in his proposal, for I was tired of seclusion. I know not to what place he brought me, but the house we went to was small and neat, where I took the name I believed myself

entitled to, but without prefixing to it the title which was my own by birth. Three months passed away, yet still I heard nothing of my marriage being proclaimed; and though I restrained myself from urging it, for fear Villars would imagine I had any doubts of his integrity, yet the recollection of this delay preventing me addressing myself to my parents as an acknowledged wife, and being able to inform them of his true situation, which I was not yet perfectly acquainted with, preyed on my mind, and deeply oppressed my spirits. For, although my error left me without hope of receiving their dear pardon, yet I thought it would be the sole remains of humiliation in my power, to present myself before them in a respectful address. About this time I perceived that Villars, himself, got uneasy—he became dissatisfied, restless, and, at times, melancholy; and two or three different periods, was absent for as many weeks. At his return one time, he told

told me that he was employed fitting up an elegant mansion for my reception the ensuing winter in London."

'And my Agnes will be not a little astonished, and, I hope, pleased,' added he, 'at the unexpected distinction with which she'll enter it.'

"I could not fathom the meaning of his words," continued Agnes, "but I relied on them. Fatal—fatal reliance; I was born to be the victim of his deception."

She again paused a short time, and took some reviving drops, after which she again proceeded.

"I come to that part of my detail," she went on, "which opened my eyes to his deception, and unveiled the character I had weakly depended on. Mr. Villars once more quitted me, as he said, for a few days, and as he kissed me going, I felt something at my heart that unaccountably flashed on it, the recollection of *Judas*;

yet why it did so I could not divine, for even at that moment I was free of doubts. The second day of his absence, as I was sitting in my own apartment reading, a favourite little dog I had came into it, playing with a piece of paper, which appeared like a letter, and I took it from him; it was such, and I saw it directed to Mr. Villars; yet, conceiving I had no right to investigate his correspondence any more than another person's, I smoothed it with my hand, for the purpose of refolding it properly, when, in doing so, I perceived the address of 'My Lord.' I started—my curiosity was then excited, and my conjecture, that the words he had used respecting the distinction which would attend my return to London, implied his own title, and the surprise I should feel at learning the rank he held in life. The proof of its truth was in my hand—I could not be condemned for searching into it. I took it up. The commencement shewed it written by some person in a jail, who was under

under dreadful apprehensions for his life, and who earnestly conjured his Lordship to interest himself for him, in return for the many services he had rendered him.

"This part of the epistle," continued Agnes, "was much defaced and torn, therefore I could but imperfectly comprehend the writer's real situation; it was legible however in the most material point to me.

'They say your niece is come to light, my Lord,' was the continuation of the letter; 'how that has happened, is more than I can pretend to penetrate into; neither can I give full credit to it, for I think they would be wise people that could discover her at this distance of time. If that were the case, it would help to renovate the existence of Lady Fitzwalter. The last time I was prying round Deventon, I saw her Ladyship walking out, and she did not appear as if she intended to give place to your second wife, Lady Agnes. Take care, my dear Lord, how she is seen as such, or your neck would be in as much danger as

mine. Mrs. Villars (for I can't *yet* call her Lady Fitzwalter) is a lovely creature indeed, and her beauty might almost tempt a jury to return a favourable verdict to the man who could no otherwise gain her than by deception; but the virtues of her real Ladyship would militate, I fear, against their wish to save him.'

"I could proceed no further," continued the betrayed Agnes; "the horrible scrawl dropped from my enervated fingers, and, Oh! just God! at that moment I endured the punishment due to my offence."

Mrs. Villars was here subdued, her head again rested on the pillow, and every recollection was for some time suspended. Anna and Emily had scarcely power to assist in her restoration—the husband of Mrs. Villars had been the execrable Fitzwalter, and the humanity which had instructed them to forgive his former crimes, was now silenced in this additional communication of his unparalleled infamy.

The

The unfortunate victim of his baseness opened her eyes.

"I must hasten to conclude," said she, with increased languor; "I feel myself fast declining. The contents of that dreadful letter worked me to desperation; my soul despised the execrable Fitzwalter, and against ever beholding him again I solemnly vowed, unless chance presented his hateful person before me. Not to remain longer in his house, I was equally resolved on; and, though friendless, determined to endure every misery, rather than continue under the roof of so consummate a villain. The first thing I did was to enclose the letter in a cover for Mr. Villars, directed to the same place I always addressed him, in which I simply wrote—'From Agnes,'—which was sufficient to inform him of every thing. I had a few guineas about me, and without considering where or whither I should go, for I was unacquainted with any direction, I enveloped myself in a deep

bonnet and cloak, when I set out as chance would guide me. I had walked a considerable length of way, and was growing very weary—for, ah!" added Agnes, "my situation precluded every lengthened fatigue, when I heard a carriage approach; it was a public or stage-coach, and I called to the driver, enquiring if he had a vacant place within? he answered, I might have my choice of seats, as the vehicle was empty; and I got into it, where indulging my own miserable meditations, I knew not how we drove, until we stopped at some place where it was customary to dine. There we took up another passenger, an elderly gentleman, who endeavoured to draw me into conversation: I replied only in abstracted monosyllables; yet I believe he discovered by my manner that some secret grief preyed on me, for even my inattention to his kind efforts could not relax them. When we stopped for the night, he tenderly handed me from the coach, and, having perceived I was a stranger, gave orders for my comfortable

fortable accommodation, and had some refreshments sent to my room, which I otherwise should not have thought of demanding. Rest I could not obtain, my brain was a chaos of distraction, yet where I should go, or what I should do, never once occupied it; it was wholly engrossed by the wretch who had deceived me; and when I entered the coach in the morning, I was better calculated for a mad-house. The attentive stranger redoubled his kind assiduities when he perceived how ill I was, and delicately hinted several times whether he could render me any service, which, probably, I should have availed myself of to get from this kingdom, if chance had not turned my thoughts another way. We were driving through a cultivated country; for the first time, my attention was attracted by it, and I remarked its beauties.

'Yes,' replied the stranger, 'this is a very fine part of it, and we are within a short distance of one of the most elegant

and hospitable mansions it produces—Deventon House.'

"Deventon!" echoed I, "I have heard the name before."

'It is the magnificent seat of Mr. Grenville,' he answered. 'Here it is, Madam; and that beautiful little Lodge, you see yonder, at the extremity of the Park, is the habitation of one of the most angelic of human beings, who is, unfortunately, married to a fellow very unworthy of her—Lady Fitzwalter.'

"Lady Fitzwalter!" I exclaimed, "and my wretched heart responded in deepest tones to the baneful being who owned it. The thought which flashed my mind was as quick in its execution as in its formation; I called the driver to stop, paid him his demand, and took leave of my generous unknown friend, who again pressed his assistance, did I require any. I answered him with grateful thanks, that I had no longer occasion to intrude further on his humane attentions,

attentions, as I was going to Lady Fitzwalter's, whose house I should have passed but for him. Alas!" continued Agnes, "to become an inmate of it had never entered my imagination till that moment; for how could I entertain a deliberate thought of asking protection from the person whom I had unconsciously injured? It was the noble benevolence of her character which induced me, and I found it amply deserving the panegyrics it received. She has been to me an angel of charity; she has united every tender appellation in the name of friend, and her best reward is the feelings of her own expanded heart. If she is yet ignorant of all her husband's baseness, let her ever remain so. Let this transaction be entombed with me, and at the last day may Villars rise from his grave as acquitted of it by his heavenly Judge, as I, at this awful moment, forgive him. My parents!—Oh! there I experience every torture the tyrant, Death, can bring. I die without their blessed forgiveness, and that

beloved boon wanting to seal my passport to the Throne of Mercy, gives to my soul the pangs of death, ten thousand times more painful than the agonies of my wretched body. Do you, De Courcy, inform them of my repentance, and my humble contrition, when I am no more—when I have expiated my errors with my life. May it do so, and I resign it with cheerfulness to the gracious God who gave it. Soon shall I do so; I feel myself going apace. All that will shortly remain of me is my sad story; may it be a warning to the daughters of vanity against indulging its destructive passions—it has been my bane. I thought not of the more intrinsic charms of the mind, whilst contemplating the fragile beauties of my person, and to exhibit them over the rest of my sex, has proved my error in my punishment. May Heaven bless you all, and restore peace to the benign representative of it—Lady Fitzwalter! And now, my friends, I wish to be left with my confessor, that the little while I have yet to linger

linger here, may be devoted to that Great Being before whom I am so shortly to appear."

They all, except De Courcy, took an affectionate leave of the resigned and patient sufferer, and he said he would again visit her. The tear of compassion, and heart-felt regret, bedewed her hand, as they each pressed it respectively to their lips; but the sentiment which involuntarily rose there, at parting from this unhappy victim of villainy, returned unexpressed to their hearts, when recollecting that the cause of it was gone to receive the award of his Eternal Judge.

On De Courcy descending, his man put into his hands a note, which, he said, had come express from Exeter, just as he had gone up to Mrs. Villars, by a servant, who requested his immediate attendance to its contents, but it was not necessary for him to wait an answer. He tore it open, but

what was his surprise, his consternation, grief, yet pleasure, when he read as follows:

BILLET.

"MY DEAR DE COURCY,

"The ties of nature are not to be subverted, nor their emotions controuled; I feel them at my heart, and have obeyed their dictates. Your last kind letter has determined the unconquerable feelings of a parent's bosom, and I am come to answer it, in person, and to express to *you* my thankful gratitude.

"My still beloved child is in England; you can inform me where she is to be found. I arrived here a few minutes ago, with the Marechesa, whose impatience to fold once more to her maternal breast the dear child of her affections, would not allow her to remain behind in Naples. Come then, generous friend, complete your benevolent task; conduct us to our alienated daughter,

daughter, that, in the assurance of our restored tenderness, she may receive once more our blessing, with the full forgiveness of her beloved parents.

"THE MARECHESE AND MARECHESA
DI LUDOVISA.

"The Hotel we are at is near you, I am told—I don't know the name of it."

De Courcy entered the drawing-room, where the ladies sat weeping over the sad story of Agnes. He threw down the letter on the table.

"Read that!" he cried. "Oh, God! what a trial to the wretched father and mother!"

Anna seized, and read it aloud.

"Oh, wretched — wretched parents!" exclaimed

exclaimed she, when she had gone through it; "your trial is severe indeed."

"It must not be delayed," cried De Courcy, starting forward, and ringing for a servant, gave orders for a carriage to be got ready instantly, with four of the fleetest horses. "Fly," added he to the servants; "every moment is precious."

The man withdrew, and in five minutes it was at the door.

"Go," continued he, to his dear Anna, "go to the suffering Agnes; tell her—— I know not what to bid you say to her; your own heart must point out how to break this affair. Heaven, I hope, has heard the sufferer's prayers, and sends to her the sole blessing she desired on earth, to soothe her repentant death-bed agonies. Oh, may she live to receive their's! Go—go, my Anna, whilst I hasten to perform my melancholy office; and may the Almighty enable the wretched parents to fulfil

fulfil the task for which they come—to bestow on their daughter their blessing and their pardon."

He threw himself into the carriage; the horses feet scarcely touched the ground, and he was in Exeter before he had time to collect his scattered thoughts, or wipe the traces of affliction from his sad and melancholy countenance.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

"While to the faultless form that breathless lies,
Fond unavailing tears by us are given,
Her hallow'd spirit claims its native skies,
Borne on the downy wings of Peace to Heaven."

SLOW and sad, Anna returned to the chamber door of Agnes, where she paused a few minutes, on hearing the voice of the clergyman within reading prayers, and during that period she sought to tranquillize her own agitated spirits, not to alarm the poor dying penitent. Presently it opened, and the venerable divine advanced. Anna caught his hand; she looked expressively at him, but could not make the demand she

she wished. He understood what she would say, and replied to her tacit question.

"Mrs. Villars, Madam, is tranquil and composed; I think she may yet hold out a few hours."

"Thank God!" exclaimed Anna. "Oh, Sir, you know not what she has to encounter. Her father—her mother, are come."

"Indeed!" cried the pious man; "I truly rejoice in the happy tidings, although I know not who they are, but that her offence has been great, yet her repentance exemplary. This information must be broke to her with caution; joy might prevent her receiving the benediction she does not hope for, but which to obtain has been her ardent prayers. I shall wait to attend her, if my presence is found necessary."

Anna entered.

"Is it you, my dear Mrs. de Courcy?" said the poor feeble Agnes. "How good you

you are to return so soon to the chamber of death."

Anna knelt by the bed-side. Mrs. Villars continued to speak.

"The worthy divine has just quitted me; he bids me hope in the mercy of a gracious God—I never despaired in it—I trust in his great attribute, and through it my parents' forgiveness. Oh! that they were near to receive my departing breath!"

"And if they were," answered Anna, "the interview would be more than you could bear."

"No," replied she, "God would afford me strength to expiate my offences at their dear feet, by resigning my last sigh there."

"Did De Courcy ever tell you he wrote to them," asked Anna, "to plead in your favour?"

"May Heaven requite him for it!" exclaimed Agnes, joyfully. "Good, kind De Courcy. Is it long since, my friend?"

"Yes," replied Anna, "and they gave him

him to understand in answer, that, if they knew where you were to be found, they would come themselves to——"

"Come," cried she, half raising herself in the bed, "come—Oh! say—say it all—I can bear it. Come to what?"

"To restore you to their affections," she answered, "and receive you to their arms."

"You have a meaning in your looks, Mrs. de Courcy," said the agitated Agnes, "which I can almost interpret, which tells me——. Oh! speak, I conjure you, if you would prolong my life."

"They are not yet arrived," cried Anna, hastily, "but are momentarily expected here. An express has come from them, that they are within a *very* short distance, and De Courcy has flown to meet and hasten them."

"Merciful and Eternal God!" said Agnes, fervently uplifting her weak hands and dying eyes—"thou, who knowest my heart, prolong, I beseech thee, this wretched existence,

istence, till a parent's blessing seals my pardon, and wafts my soul, disencumbered of its guilt, to the Throne of thy Heavenly Mercy."

She again called for the clergyman, and repeatedly asked for restoratives to support her fainting spirits. Anna would not leave her, but most humbly joined with her and the divine in fervent devotion, and prayers for a yet longer prolongation of fleeting life.

De Courcy had in the mean while arrived at the place of destination. The impatient Marechese flew to receive him.

"Welcome, my generous friend," he cried, leading him to his Lady, who sat in the parlour, agitated beyond the power of moving at the sight of De Courcy, whilst her eyes sparkled with joy and hope.

"My generous, noble De Courcy!" she exclaimed, "my dear attentive friend! Oh! may

may the happiness you have given the parent's heart be returned tenfold on your own when you become one, without ever sharing a parent's sorrows! My Agnes—forgive a mother's impatience! Where is she?—is she well?—is she happy?—is Villars a kind husband? Say she is near me, that my anxious soul may fly to meet her, and, pressing my loved child to my bosom, tell her a mother's feelings conceal all the daughter's errors. Oh!" continued she, "I could ask a thousand questions, still hear them answered, and again repeat them. But why this averted look?—what mean those emotions?—Tears too. De Courcy, what am I to conjecture?—Speak. Am I doomed to lasting wretchedness?—am I childless?—is Agnes dead?"

"No," replied he, hardly able to articulate his words, "but this moment is eventful, it admits of no delay; may Heaven enable you to sustain with fortitude what I have to relate."

He

He then, in as gentle a manner as his oppressed feelings would admit of, told them that the unexpected death of Villars and the child (but without mentioning the dreadful truth) had operated on the health and spirits of Lady Agnes, together with the unhappy reflection of her breach of duty, which nothing could assuage, and that his mother had some time after prevailed on her to come to Deventon, in hopes of the air proving beneficial to her declining state.

"But why should I conceal," added he, "that her recovery is not to be expected? She has at all times expressed her most anxious wishes for your forgiveness, though to expect seeing you she believed a vain one; and now that you are arrived, at a moment so unlooked for, let me implore of you both to exert your fortitude and philosophy, and hasten to bestow the blessing her impatient soul hovers to receive. She knows you are come, and tremblingly

tremblingly awaits to meet you, while life yet quivers at her heart. Come, dearest friends, come and behold the death-bed of an expiring saint, and let the thoughts of the eternal happiness your beloved child is going to receive, support you in her loss, and enable you to submit, with resignation, to the will of Heaven."

"Not my will, Oh, God! but thine be done," meekly expressed the afflicted Marechesa, folding her arms across her bosom, and lowly bowing her head. "Lead me, De Courcy—lead me to my child—let me fold her to my heart, whilst it is yet sensible of its beatings."

He handed the mournful parents to the carriage, which again traced the road to Deventon as expeditiously as it had come. Not a word broke the deep expression of woe during the short journey, but heart-rending sighs issued from every bosom, whilst De Courcy's throbbed with countless emotions, lest the melancholy scene should be for ever closed ere they had time to meet it.

Anna and the clergyman were still at the bed-side of Agnes, when the sound of the approaching carriage reached the former's ear. She glanced her looks towards him; he hastened to the window, and beheld the expected objects alight, and he again knelt in pious prayer for the support of the expiring creature before him.

"My Agnes — my love," sobbed out Anna; "a little longer, thou patient sufferer, and all your anxious wishes are realized. They come, my Agnes—the fond parents of your affectionate heart will soon arrive to bless—Oh, dearest Agnes, I would have *you* be composed, whilst I (whose feelings are comparatively trifling to your's) try in vain at resignation."

Agnes raised her heavy eyes.

"If they are arrived, Oh, hasten them!" she feebly articulated. "A few moments—go my friend—I feel this exhausted frame fast sinking. Power Supreme!" ejaculated she,

she, "yet a little longer let me linger here."

Her trembling fingers were faintly joined together, and she devoutly raised her soul to Him who alone could assist her. Anna quitted the room. Agnes again called for cordials. The clergyman counted the faint beatings of her pulse, as he held her hand in one of his, and addressed his anxious prayers to the Most High, in behalf of his lowly creature.

The door once more opened; Mrs. de Courcy entered. The eyes of Agnes were turned towards it, but the faint gleam which had illumined them, as quickly retreated when she perceived who it was.

"They are not come," said she, in a faltering voice; "my hopes are vanished," and she sunk her head on the shoulder of Anna.

She thought her dying.

"They are—they are!" exclaimed Mrs. de Courcy. "Agnes, my love, look up—they are here."

She again raised her languid head. The Marechesa entered, supported by De Courcy; the afflicted father followed, who turned to the other weeping friends, for the relief they were incapable of bestowing. The parents drew near the bed-side; Agnes observed them. She clasped her hands emphatically together, and raised her eyes for a moment towards Heaven; then, as quickly disengaging them, disencumbered herself of the bed-clothes, and hastily throwing herself from it, sunk before them on her knees.

"Forgive—bless—" was all she could utter. Her night-cap had fallen off, and her long shining black tresses floated over her white wrapping-gown, and shaded part of her face, which was pale as monumental marble.

The

The Marechesa stooped to raise her. Agnes extended one hand to her father, the other encircled her mother's neck.

"We bless and forgive, my Agnes," sobbed out, in convulsive accents, the nearly distracted parents. "We bless and forgive you, and may Heaven extend its pardon as freely as we do. My Agnes—my daughter—is it thus—thus we meet?"

A hectic of a moment passed the cheek of Agnes, as her mother's embrace pressed on the poor wounded side, of which she knew nothing; it died away like the lightning's hasty flash. She tried to lift the hand of her father to her lips—it would not do; nature had made its last struggle. Her hold relaxed. She once more raised her eyes to her mother—their lustre was extinct. A sigh, soft as the slumber of a sleeping infant, escaped her lips; a smile of heavenly joy diffused itself over her dying countenance. She meekly bowed her head, and resigned, without a pang,

her last breath on the bosom of her from whom she drew her first.

* * * * * *

The convulsive throbbings of a mother's heart ceased; every pulse stood suspended; her eyes, fixed to one point, gazed, unconscious of its object, on the lovely lifeless form she yet strained to her heart, till exhausted strength sunk into insensibility, and she dropped in the arms of Mr. Grenville, ignorant of her misery or her existence, and was, in that state, conveyed by him to another chamber.

When the wretched mother was restored to animation, it was discovered, that in the extreme sensibility of her loss, reason had been overthrown, and as she raved of her adored Agnes, the cause of her estrangement was lost in its own source. She was diligently watched, for still her slumbering senses hovered to the beloved being who engrossed her dormant faculties, and Agnes was the name which dwelled on her tongue.

"Who

"Who said Agnes was dead?" would the unconscious matron exclaim. "She slumbers—She slept in my arms—Did I not hold her there?—I blessed her, as I folded my child to my heart—She could not rest in peace without it—Does she rest in peace?—Hush! do not disturb my sleeping child—Poor Agnes—They say she had a child too—I have not seen it—Does it repose with its mother?—Hark! Agnes calls me—I come, my love—Your mother hastens to you."

She would, at these times, exert herself to get out of bed, which the vigilance of her attendants would prevent, and the wretched Marechesa would patiently submit to their restrictions, on being told that her daughter yet rested in peaceful slumber, when she would again say, putting her finger to her lips—

"Hush! do not disturb her—She sleeps, and dreams of me—I dream of her incessantly—She appears to me an angel of light—She tells me I must go with her—

Where?—where would Agnes bring me? —See—She beckons me to follow—Yes, yes, Agnes, thy fond mother will follow thee through this world and the next."

The third night of the unhappy Marechesa's ravings, she dropped into a gentle repose; her attendants drew the curtains around the bed, and placed the lights at a distance, when, exhausted themselves by so many hours of careful watchfulness, one of them rested in the great chair placed at the bed-side, whilst the other retired for a short interval of repose to an adjoining apartment. The former opened her heavy eyelids, as the morning cock proclaimed the approach of day. She listened—all was silent, save the early harbinger. She started from her recumbent posture, and gently threw aside the curtains. Merciful Heaven!—the object she sought was not within them. She uttered a piercing cry; it rouzed the attendant guard, and awakened the vigilant friends above. De Courcy, Villeroy, and the restless Marechese, hastily arose,

arose, as actuated by one sentiment; they repaired towards the chamber from whence had proceeded the alarm. The terrified servants declared the truth, when De Courcy instantly hurried to the apartment where rested the body of Agnes and her murdered infant, hung round with the sable insignia of death, and a few wax tapers, gleaming their quivering light, to exhibit more awfully the solemn stillness of the place. Here his search was just; the pale corpse of Agnes was entwined in her mother's embrace—she had it clasped close within it. Every earthly sorrow was hushed to everlasting repose; for, on the bosom of her lifeless daughter, the mother had resigned her soul to its Creator.

* * * * * *

The bodies of Agnes and her child were deposited together, as by her desire, in the same shell, and, with that of the Marechesa, sent off to Naples, to be interred in the last receptacle of the Ludovisas. The disconsolate father and widowed husband fol-

lowed soon after, having exhibited his acknowledgments at Deventon, by presenting to Anna and Emily the jewels of Lady Agnes, which the fond parents had brought over with them to give her; having, in her flight from Ludovisa, left every thing of value belonging to her behind: and from both De Courcy and Villeroy he obtained a promise of their visiting him in Naples, with their respective wives, as soon as possible after the latter became a Benedict.

The body of Lord Fitzwalter was sent down to the family vault in the neighbourhood of Eure Castle. The funeral obsequies were conducted with the utmost privacy, and not a tear fell to the memory of the vast domain's late possessor. It was placed at the foot of his worthy predecessor, and the closing of the vault shut his name and remembrance from the world.

The tragical events at Deventon were not calculated to produce any agreeable consequence to the weak frame of Mrs. Jeffries.

Jeffries. They succeeded each other so quickly, that her delicate and enfeebled nerves were in perpetual agitation. These, and declining years, brought her to the wished-for haven of her entombed happiness—the grave of her beloved husband. She died in the presence of De Courcy, as it was her own desire that Anna should not witness it; and her death was like her life, tranquil and just.

It was a long time before a smile was seen to illumine a countenance of any of the inhabitants at Deventon. Melancholy seemed to have made it her abode, and her sad representative was Lady Fitzwalter, who, relieved from the derangement of her intellectual powers, became languid, abstracted, and gloomy; frequently starting into ejaculations of horror, when the image of Fitzwalter presented itself to her thoughts, in all the terrific remembrance of his last dreadful act.

Villeroy, the day after he entered his

majority, was privately united to his loved Emily, when, having by gradual solicitations, obtained his wish of getting his dear aunt down to Eure Castle, who, now that the principal cause of her absence from it had been so wonderfully removed, made no objection to returning there to resign her last breath. She accompanied him and his bride, with De Courcy and Anna, to it; but her feelings were powerfully operated on when she re-entered this abode of her past transient happiness. Her beloved little village had resumed some of its former comforts, yet few of its inhabitants were recognized by her. Those she had left there were either gone to some other place, or no longer in this world; or, a few of their children, grown up, were only remembered to her Ladyship by name, although *her's* had been remitted to each individual, and the benefactress of the hamlet welcomed by them with every demonstration of joy. Lady Fitzwalter once more visited the peaceful cottages, and resumed her former liberal donations; but, alas! she

she was not long permitted to bestow her personal benefactions—she daily sunk beneath the pressure of her sorrows; and her beloved Anna had safely presented an heir to his delighted father, when this exalted woman was released from her earthly calamities, to receive the glorious and everlasting reward of her virtues. She lay on a couch, for she was not able to repose in a bed. Anna would not quit her a moment; she sat by her side, as tenderly she pressed the emaciated hand of her aunt to her lips and her heart. Villeroy was near, and his noble mind was subdued to infantine weakness, as he contemplated the fading form of one of the most exalted of God's creatures, whose death moments were met, by herself, with rapture, hope, and joy.

"You weep for me, my beloved children," said she, in broken accents. "Ah! rather rejoice at my emancipation from a world wherein I was decreed to suffer so much—I do not repine at it—If it has paved

paved my way to the Heaven my soul pants after, I should rather think my sorrows have been a blessing—Those whom God loveth, he chastiseth—Oh, God! thou alone canst tell what this heart hath endured; and thou seest how joyfully it turns to thee, as the glorious hope of my eternal felicity—I have not wilfully transgressed, and to the errors of his sinful creatures, he is a merciful as well as righteous master."

Ah! could Anna or Villeroy suppress their tears?—No; they fell in torrents, they were not to be controuled, and they were the only relief their convulsive bosoms could attain. Lady Fitzwalter dropped into a profound sleep of many hours—it was the forerunner of death. She opened her eyes once more—they fixed on the beloved objects, which, next her God, occupied her dying thoughts.

"Heaven bless you, my adored children," said she, falteringly; "may years of bliss await

await you and your dear friends. Do not grieve at my being happy—for happy, I trust, I shall be. This last embrace."

Anna and Villeroy leaned over her—She attempted to clasp them to her heart, but the effort was vain—They imprinted a kiss on her pale quivering lips; their tears bedewed her face—Her glazed orbs raised to Heaven—Villeroy held her up in his arms—Anna pressed her hand.

"Father of Mercy! receive me," trembled on her tongue; "bless those children of thy care—See, Villeroy—My brother—He waits to cond——."

Her head fell on the shoulder of her nephew; her eyes closed to this world for ever. A smile played on her face; it indicated her happiness was already commenced—It was visible when her coffin was closed.

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Such

Such was the end of Lady Fitzwalter. Rich in every virtue that could adorn her sex, she was marked peculiarly for misfortune; yet she met it with patience, with humility, and with meekness. Her remains were attended to the silent abode by every person of all rank and station for miles round, and her coffin laid by the side of the good old Lord Fitzwalter; and whilst the tears of deep regret watered her's, they sprinkled likewise the shell which enclosed the mouldering ashes of their former worthy benefactor.

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The death of Lady Fitzwalter was a long and severe affliction to her nephew and niece, equally to all her surviving friends, but none felt it more poignantly than did the worthy Lord de Courcy, who was, with Villeroy, her Ladyship's executors; and her brother's bequest was left to charitable purposes, the principal one of which was for the perpetual establishment of her favourite village, which again flourished in all

all its former happy comforts, under the auspices of Villeroy, his Emily, and Lord de Courcy; whilst the remembrance of its beloved founder lived in all hearts, and preserved its empire there, beyond the marbled urn, that, placed in the centre of the wood, enumerated her virtues and her worth to the world.

Guilford lived to see the son of his beloved master surrounded with an offspring as good and as happy as their loving and beloved parents. He enjoyed every felicity it was in their power to bestow, and was indeed as a father in the family. He never arrogated any consequence from the liberty allowed him. He lived respected, and died lamented.

The good old Robert saw his beloved Lady laid in her peaceful mansion, and life was then to him a heavy burthen; he daily drooped from that moment, and in a few weeks followed her to the silent repository; and his honest heart was ever respected,

as

as a type of her virtues he so sincerely bewailed.

Mary Jenkins, the nurse, died literally of a broken heart; for all the kindness shewn her by Villeroy and his wife (who were kind to her in the extreme, never considering her past faults) could not reconcile her to herself; but she was so truly penitent for her misdemeanours, that even her greatest enemy would have pardoned them. Margarette had resided with her in the Woodhouse, until death separated them, when, Lady Fitzwalter's having removed the objection of her living at the Castle, she was again made an inhabitant of it. She did not any longer fear the *hobgobnels* or *superannated* beings of it. It was now full of substantial subjects; and, as she was too infirm to encounter any of its heavy ascents, she was always below, surrounded with the numerous servants of the family, and had nothing to dread from the ghostified apartments above; neither did the late Mrs. Villeroy ever shake her curtains at night;

night; and the lawful heirs having been discovered and acknowledged, she believed the troublesome spirits had no more business at the Castle, and were gone to their peaceable habitation for ever, to which place she did not go herself, till the imbecilities of very old age rendered her insensible to the apprehensions she had always entertained of encountering the fangs of the grizzly monster Death.

It was many years before Anna became Lady de Courcy, and the title was obtained with deep concern, for Lord de Courcy was universally esteemed. He saw his grand-children approach maturity, and quitted the world revered and bewailed.

Emily's vivacity was unchecked by her being a matron; she preserved that and her good humour together, except when an alloy arose in the decease of some beloved friend, of which she had many: then she would feel their loss more poignantly than others of more sober spirits. Her children loved,

loved, and her husband adored her—She deserved to be happy, and she was as much so as mortal could be—Eure Castle was the favourite place of her residence, where Mr. and Mrs. Grenville frequently came to be witness of their daughter's felicity. De Courcy, and his Anna too, were often inmates of it; and this worthy family circle experienced, in each other's society, every blessing fortune could bestow, and every serene happiness they merited; whilst to promote that of every person round them was their constant study; and the endeavours they so unremittingly attended to, returned to their own bosoms, in the self-approving sentiment of benevolent virtue.

THE END.

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